

FULL
68 PAGES

AMAZING STORIES



NE
54

Sinister TALES 1½

ALL THE DARK EVIL OF THE
ARABIAN NIGHTS...ARRAYED
AGAINST A BATTLING SUPER-
GHOST! DON'T MISS NEMESIS-IN
"MENACE of MAGIC!"

DISEMBODIED
HANDS...REACHING
FOR ME...



DOES ANCIENT LEGEND SOMETIMES HIDE THE TRUTH? FOR THE AMAZING ANSWER, LET'S GO BACK TO THE MYSTERIOUS EAST OF ALMOST A THOUSAND YEARS AGO! YOUR GUIDE IS MIGHTY NEMESIS, BATTLING SPIRIT OF THE UNKNOWN... FIGHTING HIS WAY THROUGH THE TERRIFYING TALE CALLED...

"MENACE of MAGIC!"



STORY: RICHARD E. HUGHES, EDITOR.
(PINCH-HITTING FOR SHANE O'SHEA)
ART: CHIC STONE



THESE WERE BUSY DAYS IN THAT SUPERNATURAL REGION, THE UNKNOWN...

SEE TO THE NEW SPIRITS COMING IN, NEMESIS... RIGHT AWAY! THEN CONSULT WITH THE AMBASSADOR FROM HADES, NEMESIS... AND AFTER THAT, CALL ON SATAN AND GET TOUGH WITH HIM, NEMESIS...

THAT SETTLES IT! I'VE HAD IT. GRIM REAPER UP TO HERE!



ON STRIKE! I DEMAND DECENT DYING CONDITIONS!

TCH, TCH. NOTHING LIKE THIS HAS EVER HAPPENED BEFORE!

UNFAIR! UNFAIR!



OKAY, YOU WIN. YOU GET UNION HOURS, FRINGE BENEFITS AND A 2-WEEK VACATION, STARTING AS OF NOW.

YIPPEE-EEEE!

I'LL GO DOWN TO EARTH AND VISIT MY GIRL!

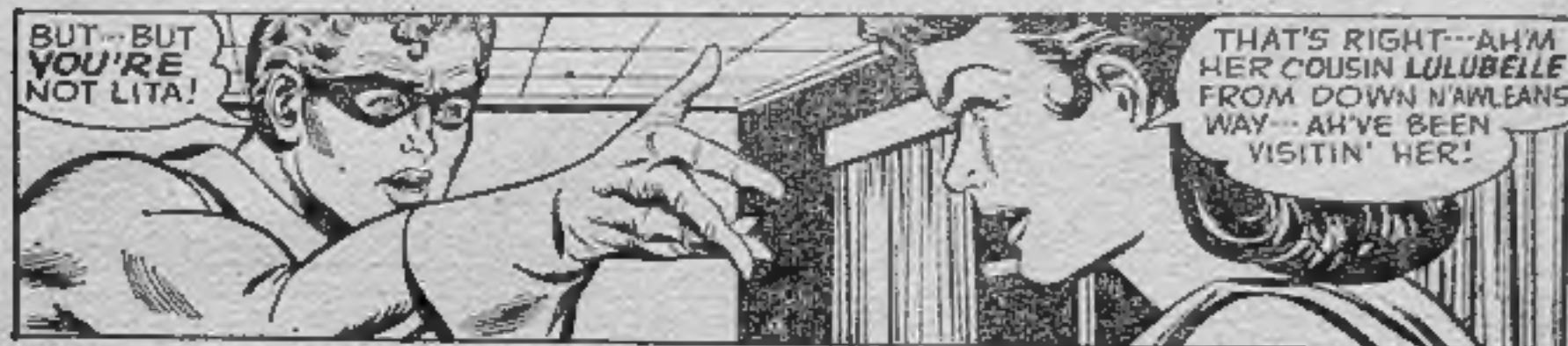


I'LL SURPRISE LITA... AND WILL SHE BE GLAD TO SEE ME!



GUESS WHO!

AH DECLARE, AH JUST CAN'T IMAGINE!



BUT... BUT YOU'RE NOT LITA!

THAT'S RIGHT...AH'M HER COUSIN LULUBELLE FROM DOWN N'AWLEANS WAY...AH'VE BEEN VISITIN' HER!



AND YO'-ALL ARE NEMESIS...LITA'S TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOU. AH'D JUST LOVE SEEIN' SOME OF THOSE GREAT POWERS OF YOURS. SHOW LULUBELLE--PLEASE!

WELL... MAYBE I JUST COULD SHOW YOU A FEW...



LOOK--I'VE MADE MYSELF INVISIBLE!

NOW I'VE TURNED MYSELF INTO A DOG--A TALKING DOG!

GET A LOAD OF THIS--I'M FLYING!

OH, OO IS JUST WONNAFUL!



WHAT A TIME FOR LITA TO WALK IN! AS SOON AS SHE COULD GET NEMESIS IN PRIVATE...

OH, OO IS JUST WONNAFUL!

FINE THING--I TURN MY BACK AND THAT'S WHAT GOES ON! YOU GIVE HER A SAMPLE OF YOUR POWERS-- BUT I NEVER NOTICED YOU GIVING ME A SAMPLE OF THEM!

BE REASONABLE, LITA! WHY I'D BE HAPPY TO GIVE YOU A REAL SAMPLE OF THEM ANY TIME A THOUSAND TIMES MORE THAN SHE GOT!

IN FACT, I'LL DO
IT **RIGHT NOW!**



**A RUSH OF WIND... A FLIGHT THROUGH THE AIR AT
UNEARTHLY SPEED... AND THEY WERE OVER PARIS...**

SO WHAT? I
DIDN'T NEED
YOU TO GET
HERE... I
COULD HAVE
DONE IT MORE
COMFORTABLY
IN A PLANE!

OH? THEN I'LL SHOW
YOU SOMETHING NO
PLANE COULD TAKE
YOU TO. **HANG
ON!**



WHAT'S...
HAPPENING?

HOLD TIGHT,
HONEY. I'M TAKING
YOU **BACK**
THROUGH
TIME!



THESE WERE THE
POWERS OF THE **SUPER-
NATURAL**... CONQUER-
ING TIME AND SPACE...

NEMESIS! IT... IT
LOOKS LIKE SOME-
THING OUT OF A FAIRY-
TALE... OUT OF **ARABIAN
NIGHTS!**

IT IS, BUT IT'S NO
FAIRYTALE. THE
LAND OF THE
ARABIAN NIGHTS
REALLY EXISTED,
AND SO DID A LOT OF
THE ADVENTURES
FROM THE
STORIES. LET'S
GO DOWN AND
SEE FOR OUR-
SELVES!

MAKE WAY!
MAKE WAY FOR
THE CALIPH
HAROUN AL
RASCHID!



WE'RE
IN LUCK.
IT'S THE
CALIPH
HIMSELF.



HALT! THAT WOMAN... CAN SHE BE A FOREIGNER?
NEVER HAVE I SEEN ONE
SO BEAUTIFUL...



DID YOU SEE THE WAY HE
LOOKED AT ME? I'VE READ
ABOUT HIM, BUT I DIDN'T
BELIEVE HE'D REALLY
EXISTED. I THOUGHT IT
WAS ALL A MADE-UP
STORY, WHAT WITH ALL
THAT BUSINESS ABOUT
MAGIC AND EVERY-
THING.

NO... IT WAS ANCIENT
HISTORY AND **REAL**.
IN THOSE DAYS, THEY
KNEW SECRETS WHICH
HAVE BEEN LOST OVER
THE CENTURIES. LIKE
THE SECRETS OF
MAGIC, A LOST
SCIENCE
UNKNOWN
TO TODAY'S
WORLD!

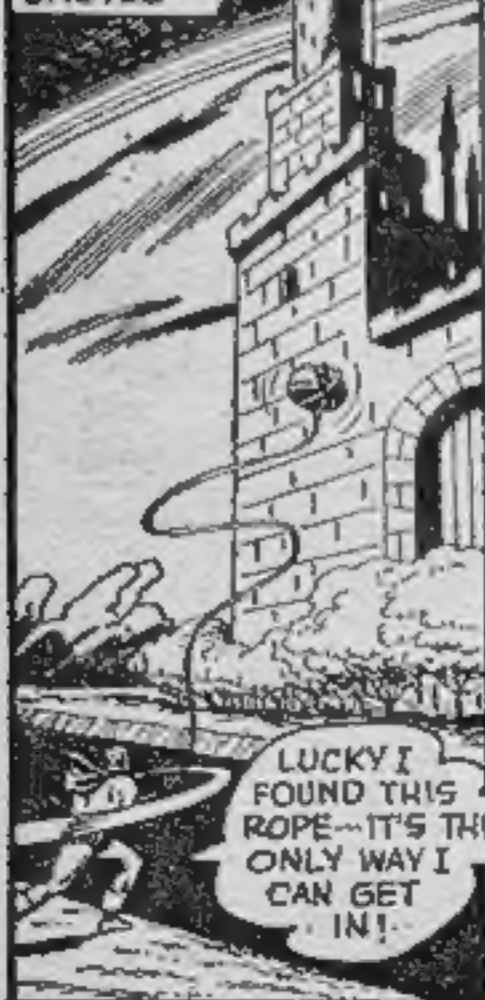








FINALLY...THE WINTER CASTLE...



LUCKY I FOUND THIS ROPE--IT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN GET IN!

WE'LL LET HIM GET A GOOD START, COME WITHIN RANGE. THEN, WHEN I GIVE THE SIGNAL...



...FILL HIM WITH ARROWS!

I'VE SEEN THE CALIPH WORK HIS EVIL MAGIC THROUGH **ALADDIN'S LAMP**...AND I KNOW WHERE HE KEEPS IT. MAYBE...MAYBE I CAN PUT IT TO GOOD USE...**TO SAVE NEMESIS!**



USE YOUR MAGIC TO RESTORE HIS STRENGTH...AND ALL OF HIS GREAT SUPERNATURAL POWERS! AND DO IT **NOW, OH LAMP!**



GREAT SCOTT! ALL OF A SUDDEN I FEEL...**RESTORED!** AS IF I'M THE MAN I WAS ABAIN!

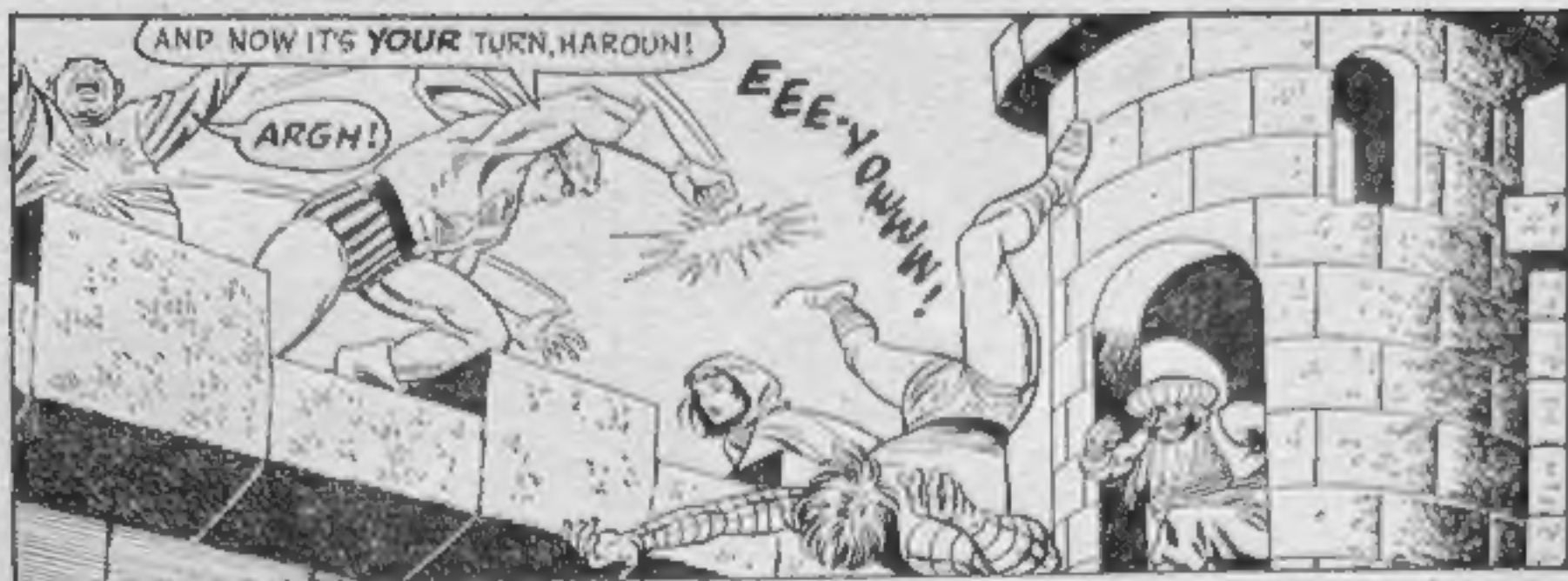


ALL RIGHT, HE'S WITHIN RANGE NOW! **GIVE HIM YOUR ARROWS!**

AI-EEEEEE!

THEY GO THROUGH HIM...AND LEAVE HIM UNHURT!







IT'S THE ROC,
RIGHT OUT OF
ARABIAN NIGHTS
...THE THING
REALLY EXISTED!
AND I... I'VE
GOT TO FACE
IT!



SNAP!



BUT THE AWFUL
CREATURE WAS
AS AGILE AS IT
WAS SUPER-
STRONG! NEXT
MOMENT... ITS
TALONS HIT
HARD!

GOT ME!
LOOKS BAD
...UNLESS...



I CALL THIS MY
PINWHEEL PLAY
...AND IT
WORKED!

CAW!



YOU'RE STRONG...
BUT I'M FASTER!
TOO BAD FOR
YOU!



CR-RAK! BONES
SNAPPED BENEATH
THE POWER OF
NEMESIS'S MIGHTY
SINEWS... AND NEXT
MOMENT...

EXIT
MR.
ROC!



BUT CALIPH HAROUN EL RASCHID HAD BEEN
WATCHING IN HIS CRYSTAL BALL. NOW HE MADE
HIS LAST DESPERATE BID... THE BID THAT
COULDN'T FAIL!

TO ME, GENIE
OF THE LAMP!
THERE IS WORK
FOR YOU!



THE ROC FAILED...BUT YOU CAN'T FAIL. FIND NEMESIS AND RIP HIM TO PIECES!



YOU DID IT, NEMESIS. YOU KILLED THE ROC!

GUESS WE'RE OUT OF DANGER AT LAST HONEY.



CRACK!

MIGHT AS WELL GET STARTED BACK. THERE'S NOTHING TO STOP US NOW.



BAM!



HE--HE'S SLIDING OFF THE EDGE! I'VE GOT TO HELP HIM...
OH-HHH!
THAT AWFUL THING...

OH-HHH!



THUD!
THUD!

CAN'T HOLD ON...



UH...

DOWN PLUNGED NEMESIS DOWN INTO THE ABYSS HELPLESS AND UNCONSCIOUS. BUT JUST IN TIME THE WHISTLING OF THE AIR PAST HIM AWOKE HIM TO THE DANGER...



WHAT'S...
HAPPENED?
WHERE AM
I...?

WHEW! NOW
LET'S GET
WITH IT!



COME! THE
CAPHAWA IS
YOU!

TURN
AROUND
GENIE.
I'M
BACK!



OHAY YOU
3G 12 EP
TAKE
THAT!



HA! YOU DARE FACE
ME? SEE THE
RESULTS FOOL!



IT WAS A BATTLE SUCH AS HAD NEVER BEEN FOUGHT BEFORE - THE GIANT GENIE AGAINST NEMESIS, MIGHTY GHOST OF THE UNKNOWN! HORRIFIED, LITA WATCHED NOT KNOWING WHO WOULD PREVAIL...



ARGH! LOOKS
LIKE YOU'VE
GOT ME AT
LAST...





... BUT LOOKS ARE DECEPTIVE!



SEE WHAT I MEAN, BIG BOY?



FREE-YUU!

HAPPY LANDINGS!



CR-RAA!

THEN, THE RETURN TRIP... THROUGH TIME AND SPACE, BACK TO 20TH CENTURY AMERICA--

WE'RE BACK HOME, HONEY! I'LL HAVE YOU IN YOUR HOUSE IN NO TIME!



WELL, SOME SCANDALOUS DOIN'S, AH MUST SAY! AH DECLARE-- YO'-ALL GO AWAY, STAY AWAY AND THEN COME BACK IN A HUSSY COSTUME LIKE THAT!



HONESTLY, NEMES S, HONEY-- AH DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU SEE IN HER!

REMIND ME TO TELL YOU, LULUBELLE-- SOMETIME WHEN YOU'VE GOT A THOUSAND YEARS TO LISTEN!



THE REVENGE OF THE WOODEN WOMAN



THIS IS THE FANTASTIC TALE OF A MAN WHO LOVED A WOMAN! A WOMAN MADE OF...WOOD!

THERE GOES CAPTAIN CORK WITH MORE POLISH! YOU KNOW WHAT FOR, DON'T YE?

AYE! FOR THE SAME THING HE DOES EVERY TIME HE'S IN PORT!



AT LEAST ONCE A DAY HE POLISHES THAT FIGUREHEAD ON HIS SCHOONER! HE EVEN TALKS TO IT!

YOU'RE LOOKING A BIT DULL TODAY, VALKYRIE, BUT A LITTLE POLISH WILL BRIGHTEN YOU UP!



I COULD SWEAR THAT YEARS AGO WHEN THE CAPTAIN TOOK COMMAND OF THE SCHOONER, THE FIGUREHEAD WAS A YOUNG MAIDEN!

AYE! AND IT'S SAID HE PUT HER ON THE SHIP HIMSELF!

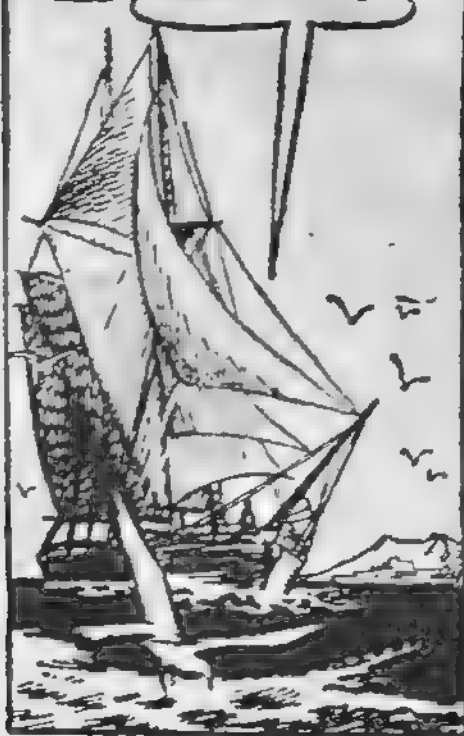
THE CAPTAIN'S A GOOD SEAMAN...BUT HE'S A STRANGE ONE!



WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY TOGETHER, MY VALKYRIE! THROUGH FOUL WEATHER AND ROUGH SEAS YOU HAVE STEERED ME SAFELY--AND WE HAVE BEEN HAPPY! NOW YOU LOOK SAD--TROUBLED! AS THOUGH YOU KNOW THE FUTURE HOLDS SOMETHING TERRIBLE IN STORE!

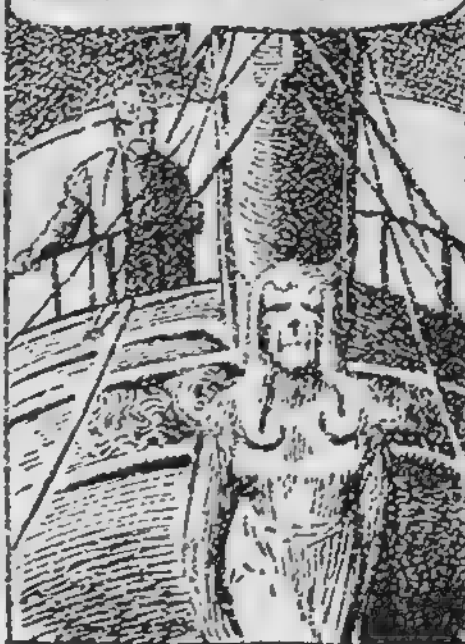


SOMEHOW, I DREAD THIS VOYAGE, VALKYRIE! I, TOO, FEEL SOMETHING DREAD AWAITS US!



A WEEK LATER AS THE SHIP MOVED THROUGH A THICK, LINGERING FOG...

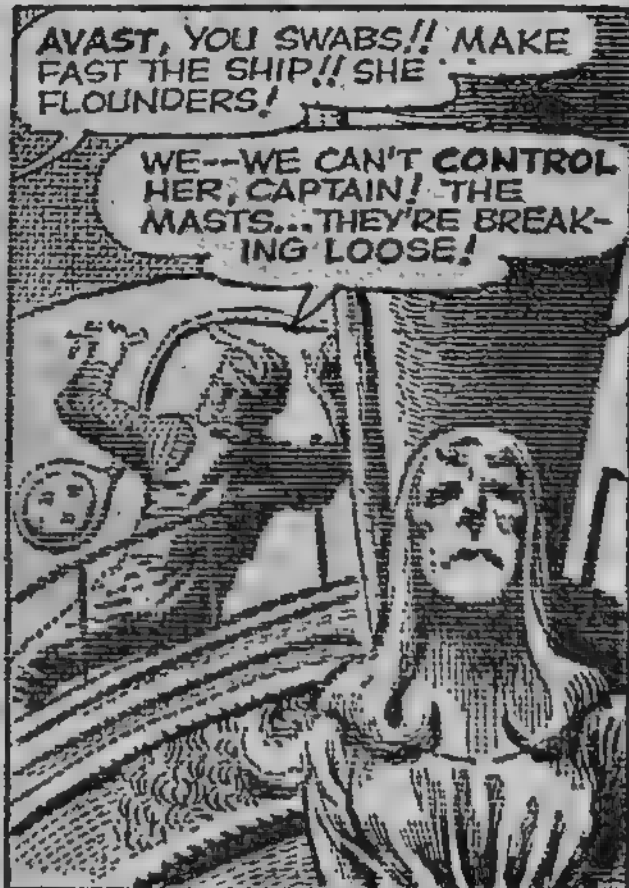
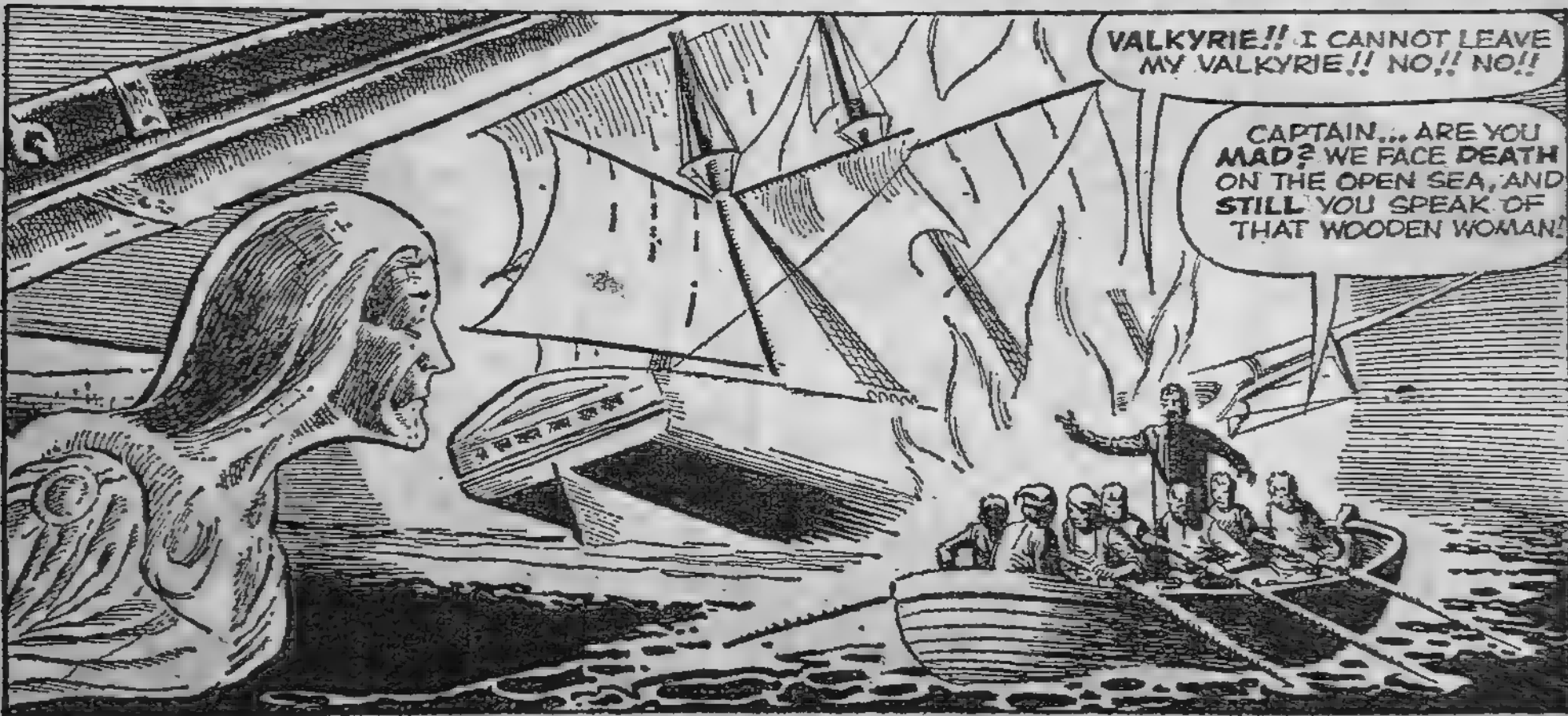
WHY DO YOU SHUDDER SO, VALKYRIE?? WHAT AWAITS US THIS NIGHT??



SILENTLY, STEALTHILY, WITHOUT WARNING, SINISTER FIGURES STOLE OVER THE SIDE OF THE SHIP, AND...

PIRATES! ALL HANDS TO ARMS!







LONG, TORTUROUS MINUTES LATER...

WE WERE ONLY ABLE TO SALVAGE ENOUGH RATIONS TO LAST FOR A FEW DAYS! THEN, WE'LL STARVE!-- OR, IF WE ARE RESCUED, WE FACE PRISON! THERE IS NO ESCAPE!

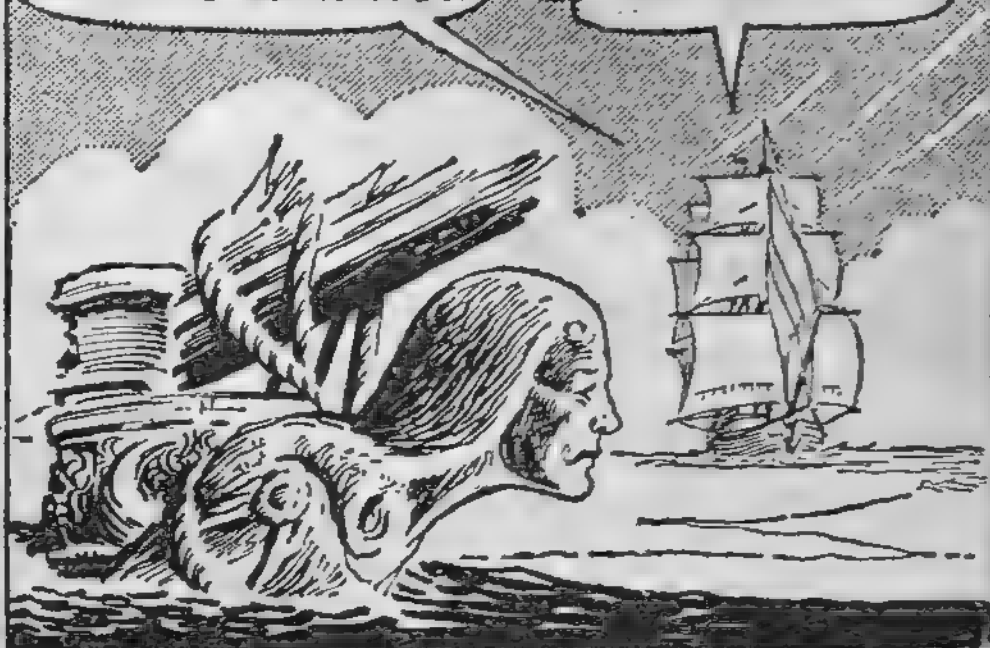
WHAT IRONY! WE ARE STRANDED ON THIS DESERT ISLE-- IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE! LEFT WITH NO HOPE... EVEN AS OUR VICTIMS WERE!



BUT TIME PASSED, AND, MANY MILES AWAY...

LOOK, CAPTAIN! A FIGURE-HEAD! ALL BUT SMASHED TO BITS--AND YET, STILL AFLOAT! SHE-- SHE SEEMS TO BECKON US!

I KNOW HER! THERE IS ONLY ONE SUCH! IT IS VALKYRIE! FROM THE PROUD SHIP OF CAPTAIN CORK!



STRANGE! SHE'S KEEPING AHEAD OF US! SHE'S LEADING US ON! BUT HOW? HOW CAN SHE FLOAT AGAINST THE CURRENT?

FOR YEARS I HAVE HEARD LEGENDS ABOUT VALKYRIE... ABOUT THE LOVE CAPTAIN CORK HAD FOR HER!



SHE WAS FASHIONED IN THE IMAGE OF HIS WIFE--WHOM HE LOVED MORE THAN LIFE--AND WHO DIED MANY YEARS AGO!!

CAPTAIN CORK! A NAVY FRIGATE! WE'RE SAVED!

VALKYRIE! MY VALKYRIE! YOU LED THEM TO ME!

CAPTAIN!! LOOK! YONDER...



SAVED!! THE WOODEN WOMAN SAVED US ALL!

BUT, LOOK!! SHE'S SINKING! VALKYRIE'S SINKING!

GO, MY VALKYRIE! TO THE REST YOU NEED! THE REST YOU DESERVE! YOU HAVE EARNED YOUR REWARD, MY LOVE! FAREWELL, MY VALKYRIE!

NO! IT CAN'T BE! BUT LOOK! THERE IS A--SMILE ON HER FACE!



AND THUS ENDS THE TALE OF THE MAN, AND THE WOODEN WOMAN! IT IS MERELY ONE OF THE COUNTLESS LEGENDS OF THE SEA... BUT WHO CAN SAY IT NEVER HAPPENED? WHO CAN SAY??



THE END

TARGET

AND THE
TARGETEERS

THE TARGETEERS VISIT A PRISON
AND RUN INTO AN ADVENTURE AS
EXCITING AS ANY THEY'VE HAD IN
THE LINE OF TROUBLE-SHOOTING.

ART BY
JOE
CERTA

BROCKTON AND THE
TARGETEERS WATCH
PRISONERS DOING CALLS
THEN'S IN THE PRISON
YARD

IT'LL BE INTERESTING TO
GET A SLANT ON PRISON
LIFE ESPECIALLY SINCE
WE'RE IN THE
LAW AND ORDER
BUSINESS OUR-
SELVES.

WARDEN
BROCKTON
WILL SEE
YOU NOW.

WARDEN BROCKTON!
WHY IT'S BILL
BROCKTON! YOU
REMEMBER HIM
DON'T YOU
BOYS?

GLAD TO
SEE YOU
BOYS I'VE
BEEN FOLLOWING
YOUR TROUBLE-
SHOOTING CAREERS
YOU'VE BEEN
GOING GREAT
GUNS

THAT REMINDS ME OF
OLD TIMES. YOU THREE
WOULD GO INTO A
PYRAMO QUICKER
THAN YOU
COULD SAY
'ALLEY-OOH.'

AND NILES
WAS ALWAYS
TOP MAN.

AS THE BOYS LOOK OUT THE WINDOW
A PLANE APPROACHES IN THE DISTANCE

THAT'S FUNNY PLANES
AREN'T ALLOWED TO
FLY OVER THE PRISON
GROUNDS

AND
FLINGS
SUPPLIES
INTO THE
YARD ..

HE'S THROWING
THEM GUNS

I'LL CALL OUT
THE ROT SQUAD!

WARDEN BROCKTON AND
HIS VISTORS DASH INTO
THE YARD ...

..AND CHARGE THE CROWD OF STR-CRAZY
CONVICTS.

THOSE TEAR BOMBS
SHOULD BRING THEM
AROUND.

THE TARGET AND TARGETEERS QUICKLY
STRIP TO THEIR RARE METAL BULLETPROOF
VEST COSTUMES. THEIR CHESTS ARE NOW
INVULNERABLE.

HEY WATCH THOSE
MEN! AFTER THEM!

THE MEN DASH THROUGH A
TUNNEL WITH THE TARGETEERS
AFTER THEM.



WE GOT ONE OF THE RATS!

WE'LL GET THEM ALL!



SOME OF THE CONVICTS REALIZE THAT THEIR BREAK HAS FAILED, AND SURRENDER

BUT FOR WARDEN BROCKTON, WHILE THE GUARD TAKE THESE MEN BACK TO THEIR CELLS THE TARGETEERS WILL TAKE CARE OF THE OTHERS

OH BOY HERE'S WHERE WE GO INTO ACTION



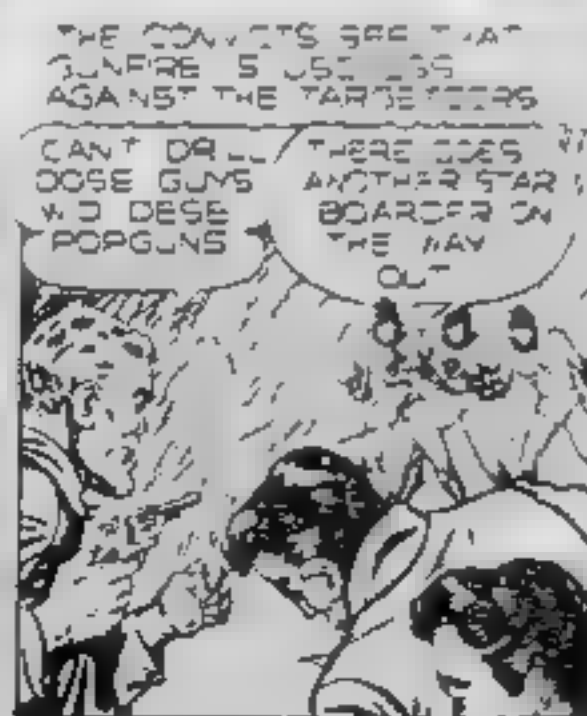
THE TARGETEERS CONTINUE THE CHASE

LUCKY FOR US THEY'RE AIMING RIGHT AT OUR BULLETPROOF TARGETS.



DOSE GUYS MUST CARRY FOUR LEAF CLOVERS

YEAH AN RABBIT'S FEET.



THE CONVICTS SEE THAT GUNFIRE IS USELESS AGAINST THE TARGETEERS

CANT DRILL DOSE GUYS W/ DESE POPGUNS

THERE GOES ANOTHER STAR BOARDER ON THE WAY OUT



... AND DECIDE TO RUN FOR IT.

WE'VE GOT TO NAB THEM BEFORE THEY GET OUT OF THE TUNNEL!



ON A COUNTRY ROAD NOT FAR FROM THE PRISON, A MAN IMPATIENTLY AWAITES THE TWO PRISONERS.

THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE LONG AGO MAYBE SOMETHING WENT WRONG.



AH! HERE COME TWO OF MY BOYS NOW. LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE IN TROUBLE.



SAVE YER GLUGS, JOE. DEY DONT DO NO GOOD ON DEM GUYS.

I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN!



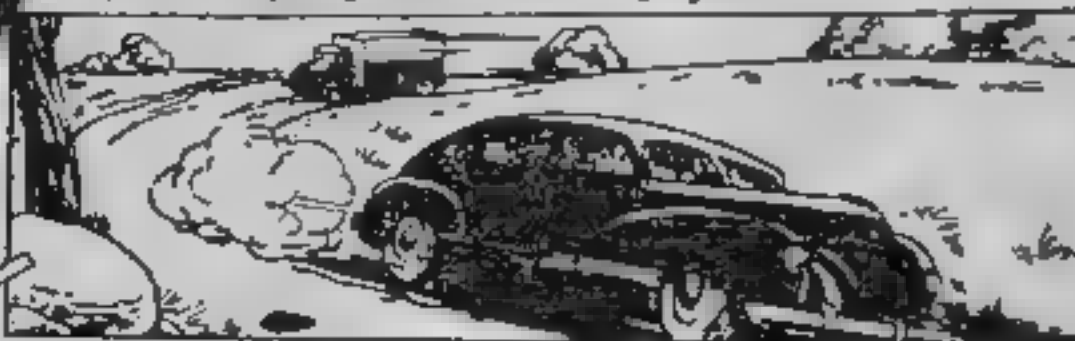
WE'D BETTER PULL OUT OF HERE!

AS THE PRISONERS SPEED AWAY, THE TARGETEERS HAIL A PASSING TRUCK.



CAN'T LET THEM ESCAPE!

...AND FOLLOW IN MAD PURSUIT..



THE CHASE LEADS TO A RAMSHACKLE HOUSE IN THE WOODS.

GOOD! WE'VE TRAILED THEM TO THEIR HIDEOUT!



AS THE TARGETEERS ENTER THE DRIVEWAY, THE CONVICTS RUN FOR COVER...

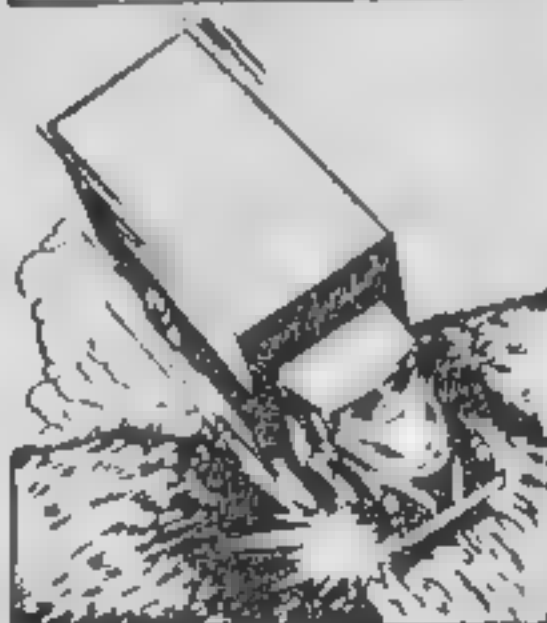


THAT'S RIGHT! RUN INTO YOUR HOLE, RATE!

...AND FIRE ON THEIR PURSUERS.



A BULLET PIERCES A TIRE AND THE TRUCK LURCHES DANGEROUSLY.



WE'LL RAM THE DOOR WITH THAT TREE TRUNK!



THE TARGETEERS STORM THE THUGS' STRONGHOLD.



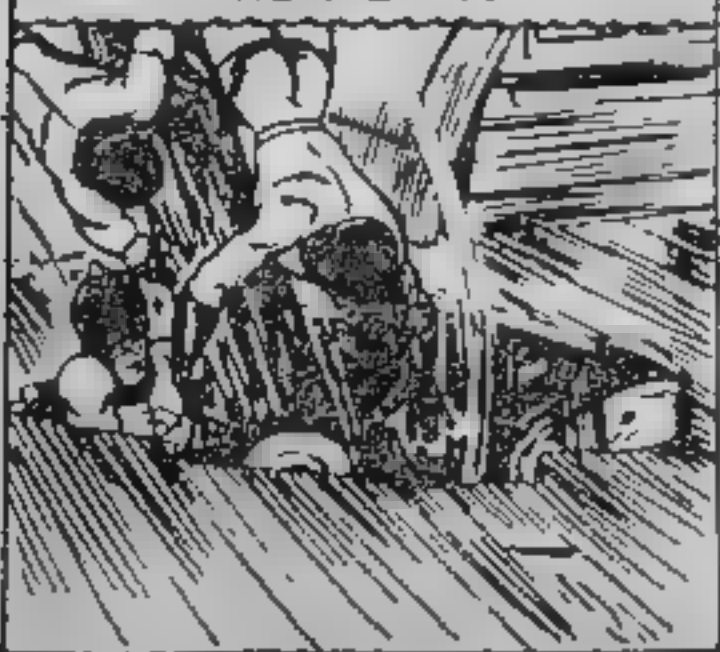
THE CONVICTS HAVE SET A TRAP FOR THEIR ATTACKERS BY REMOVING THE FLOOR NEAR THE DOOR.



DESE GUYS IS RON' FER A FALL!

DELL TEACH 'EM TO HORN IN ON A JAIL BREAK!

THE UNSUSPECTING TRIO BURST INTO THE ROOM AND HURTLE INTO THE PIT.



OKAY, BOYS, NOW DAT WE GOT YA IN BED, WE'RE GONNA SEND YA OFF TO SLEEP!

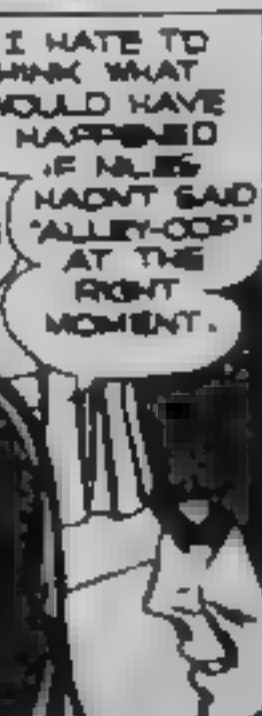
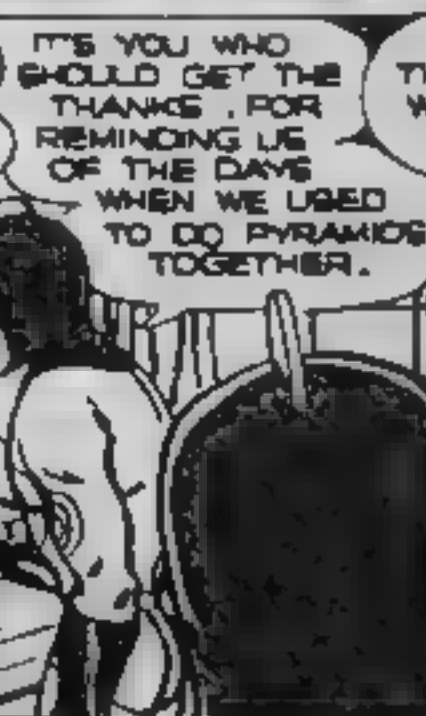
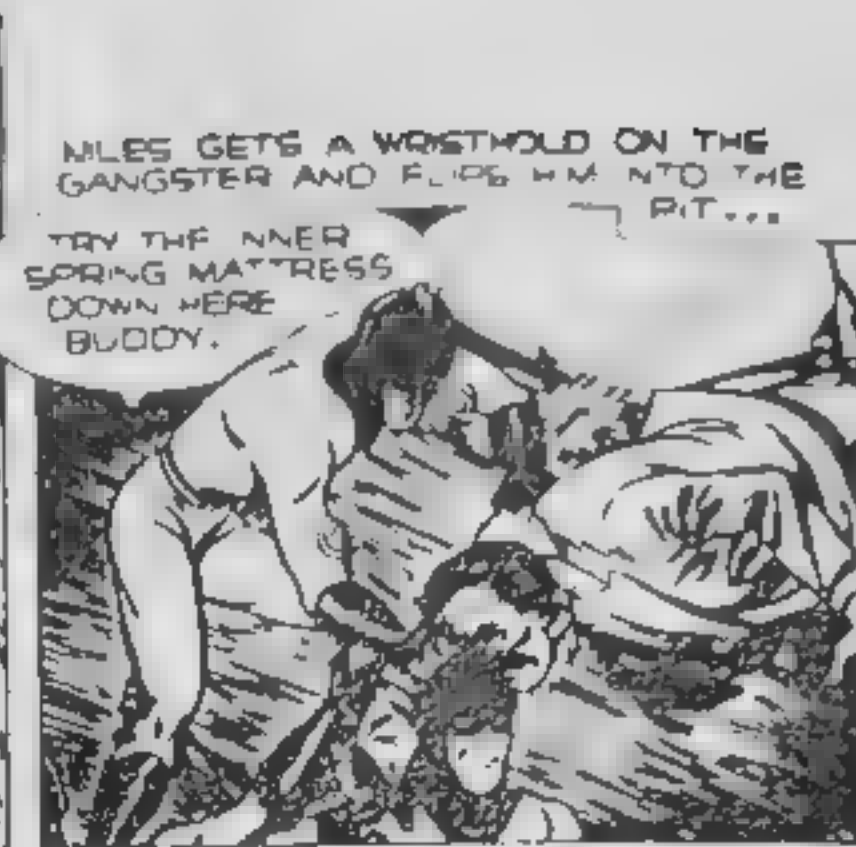


N LES GETS AN IDEA.

I HOPE THE BOYS CATCH ON.

ALLEY-OOP!





FROM SOME WORLD ACROSS THE HEAVENS, THEY CAME... AND LIKE DARK, AWESOME SPIRITS, THEY DESCENDED ON US! THEY WERE CUNNING, RUTHLESS, AND ALL-POWERFUL... AND THEY HAD BUT ONE PURPOSE--TO CONQUER AND ENSLAVE MANKIND!

I WAS A PRISONER OF THE LIVING STATUES!

SEIZE THE EARTHINGS--AND IMPRISON THEM! IF ANY RESIST, DESTROY THEM!

THESE IGNORANT SAVAGES ARE ONLY THE BEGINNING! BEFORE A MONTH HAS PASSED, WE'LL HAVE VANQUISHED EVERY LIVING BEING ON THIS PLANET! WE'LL BE THE MASTERS OF ALL EARTH!

WE'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS! BUT IT WAS WORTH IT! WITH THE PLAN WE HAVE NOW, WE CAN'T FAIL TO TAKE OVER EARTH!



I AM THE CHIEF OF A VILLAGE IN AFRICA... MY PEOPLE ARE SKILLED IN THE ART OF WOODEN SCULPTURE... AND FOR YEARS WE HAVE BEEN SELLING OUR CARVED STATUES TO THE WHITE EXPORTER WHO LIVES ON THE COAST... HE IN TURN SHIPS THEM TO ALL THE GREAT COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, WHERE THEY ARE BOUGHT AND ADMIRERD...

I'VE ALMOST FINISHED THIS LITTLE STATUE FOR YOU, NGAMI...

IT LOOKS BEAUTIFUL, GRANDFATHER!... AS GOOD AS THE ONES THAT ARE SENT TO THE EXPORTER!



THEN ONE DAY ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO, OUR VILLAGE WAS SHADOWED BY THE PRESENCE OF MANY STRANGE-LOOKING CRAFT IN THE SKY ABOVE...

LOOK! ROUND FLYING MACHINES!

AND THEY ARE WITHOUT WINGS!



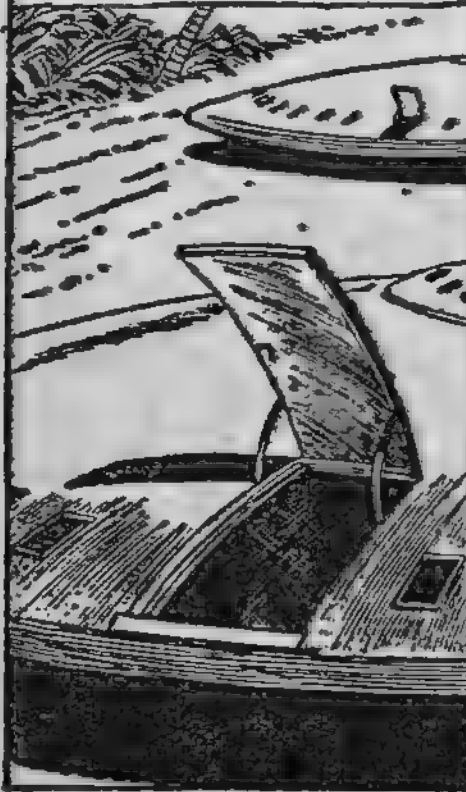
THEY CIRCLED OUR VILLAGE, LIKE GIANT BIRDS, STUDYING THEIR PREY BEFORE SWOOPING DOWN ON IT!



FINALLY, AFTER MANY MINUTES, THEY BEGAN TO LAND AT A LARGE CLEARING NEARBY IN THE JUNGLE...



AFTER THE WINGLESS CRAFT HAD ALL LANDED, THEIR DOORS OPENED...



... AND WE COULDN'T BELIEVE OUR EYES WHEN WE SAW WHAT EMERGED!!



THEY WERE WARRIORS... AND THEY CARRIED WEAPONS AND HAD MACHINES THAT WE HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE! BUT BEYOND THEIR WEAPONS AND BEHIND THEIR STRANGE COSTUME, WAS THE STILL STRANGER FACT OF THEIR APPEARANCE... FOR THESE CREATURES LOOKED EXACTLY LIKE THE STATUES CARVED BY MY TRIBE!



THEY CAME THROUGH THE JUNGLE--STRAIGHT TO OUR VILLAGE...

THIS WILL BE THE SITE OF OUR HEAD-QUARTERS! ROUND UP THESE BARBARIC EARTH-LINGS... AND IM-PRISON THEM!

YES, SIRE! AT ONCE!

WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH US? WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE?!

AND HOW DO YOU KNOW OUR LANGUAGE??



FROM OUR DISTANT GALAXY WE'VE BEEN STUDYING YOU CREATURES FOR MANY MONTHS! IN PREPARATION FOR THIS -- THE FIRST STEP IN OUR CONQUEST OF EARTH!



AS SOON AS WE HEARD WHY THE STRANGERS HAD COME, THE YOUNGER MEN OF MY TRIBE TOOK UP THEIR SPEARS...

YOU WARRIORS WILL NEVER CONQUER OUR PEOPLE!

LOOK, SIRE! THESE IGNORANT SAVAGES ATTEMPT TO STOP US WITH SPEARS! HA HA HA!

FOOLS! THOSE THINGS WON'T HELP YOU! PUT THEM DOWN!



MY MEN DIDN'T OBEY...FOR FREEDOM IS NOT TO BE GIVEN UP SO EASILY! THE SPEARS WERE THROWN! BUT, BEFORE THEY REACHED THEIR TARGET...



OUR SPEARS! THEY'VE VANISHED!!

AND SO WILL YOU, IF YOU EVER TRY THAT AGAIN!

NOW MARCH OVER TO THOSE CAVES -- ALL OF YOU! YOUR PITIFUL RESISTANCE IS OVER!



AFTER WE WERE IN THE CAVES, THE WARRIORS MADE THEM OUR PRISON...

YOU SAID THIS WAS THE FIRST STEP OF YOUR PLAN TO CONQUER EARTH! HOW CAN TAKING OVER OUR HUMBLE VILLAGE HELP YOU?

SHALL WE TELL THESE STUPID NATIVES, SIRE?

WHY NOT--THEY'RE HELPLESS TO STOP US! I SAID BEFORE THAT WE'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU EARTHLINGS FOR MONTHS! AND WE'VE SEEN THAT YOU MAKE WOODEN STATUES WHICH BEAR A REMARKABLE RESEMBLANCE TO US!



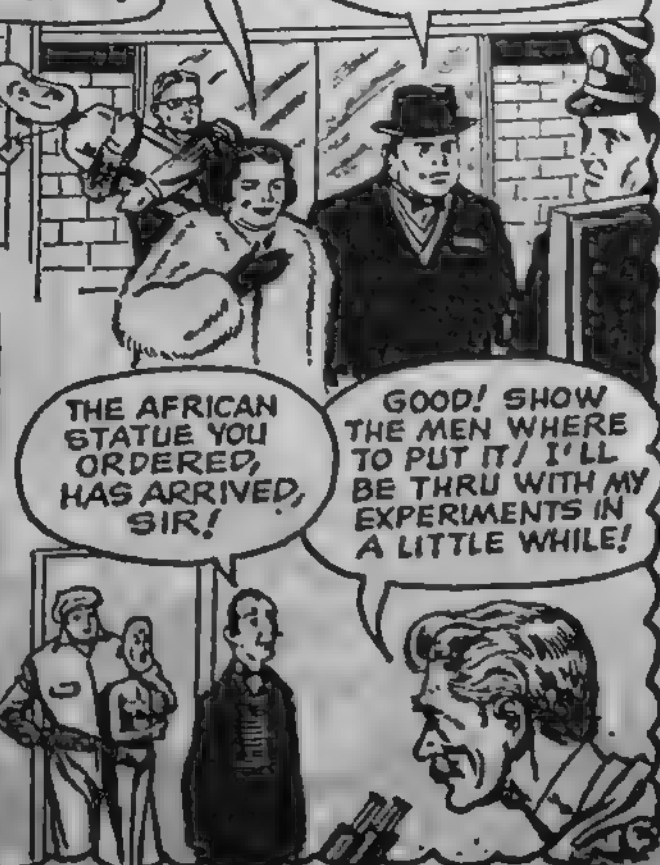
AND THAT GAVE US THE IDEA HOW WE CAN EASILY CONQUER YOUR PLANET!

WE'RE GOING TO SUBSTITUTE OUR SOLDIERS FOR YOUR STATUES! THEY'LL BE SOLD TO THE AFRICAN EXPORTER... AND HE'LL SEND THEM TO COUNTRIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD...

...WHERE, BECAUSE OF THEIR EXPENSIVE PRICE, THEY'LL BE BOUGHT BY ONLY THE RICHEST AND MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE OF EARTH! THEY'LL BE BOUGHT BY MILITARY LEADERS AND STATESMEN AND TOP SCIENTISTS --THE KEY PERSONNEL IN EARTH'S DEFENSE SETUP!

THIS STATUE WILL LOOK LOVELY IN OUR LIVING ROOM, IGOR!

YES...I'LL ENJOY IT, ON MY TRIPS HOME FROM MOSCOW!



THEN, AFTER OUR SOLDIERS ARE ALL IN THE HOMES OF THE MOST PROMINENT PEOPLE ON EARTH, THEY WILL BE GIVEN THE ORDER TO STRIKE--TO CAPTURE THEIR OWNERS, THE FOOLS WHO THOUGHT THEY WERE BUYING HARMLESS AFRICAN STATUARY!



THEN, THE REST OF US WILL ATTACK! AND WITH THE "BRAINS" OF EARTH ALREADY DESTROYED, WE SHOULDN'T HAVE MUCH TROUBLE DEFEATING THE REMAINDER OF YOU!



PEOPLE OF EARTH!--WE HAVE COME FROM ANOTHER GALAXY TO CONQUER YOU!! SURRENDER OR BE DESTROYED!!

SOON, IT WILL BE OVER... AND WE WILL BE THE MASTERS OF ALL EARTH!

HURRY UP, EARTHLINGS! WE ARE EAGER TO HAVE OUR CAPITAL CITY COMPLETED!

THE EARTH-MEN ARE NEW AT THIS KIND OF WORK! BUT AFTER A FEW YEARS AT IT, THEY'LL LEARN TO WORK FASTER!



BY THE TIME THE GENERAL HAD FINISHED TELLING US OF HIS PLAN, MY PEOPLE WERE GRIPPED BY PANIC!

KISUMU--WHAT WILL WE DO?!! HOW WILL WE ESCAPE FROM HERE??

WE WILL NOT TRY TO ESCAPE! WE WILL LET THESE INVADERS GO AHEAD WITH THEIR PLAN--WITH-OUT INTER-FERENCE FROM US!

ARE YOU MAD?!! IF WE DON'T GET OUT OF HERE AND WARN THE WORLD--THESE CREATURES WILL CONQUER ALL EARTH!



I PROMISE YOU THAT EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT! THESE INVADERS WILL CONQUER NO ONE! WE HAVE ONLY TO WAIT...TRUST ME! I KNOW WHAT I SAY!



SOON, MANY OF THE SOLDIERS, DISGUISED AS WOODEN STATUES, WERE ON THEIR WAY TO THE EXPORTER...!

REMEMBER, EARTHLING... WHEN WE GET TO THE EXPORTER, IF YOU IN ANY WAY REVEAL WHO WE ARE--YOUR WHOLE TRIBE WILL BE DESTROYED!



DAYS PASSED INTO WEEKS WHILE THE INVADERS WAITED PATIENTLY FOR ALL THEIR "SOLDIER-STATUES" TO BE SOLD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD...THE PEOPLE OF MY TRIBE ALSO WAITED... BUT NOT SO PATIENTLY...

DO NOT BE SO WORRIED! I HAVE TOLD YOU THAT THE PLAN OF THESE INVADERS IS DOOMED TO FAIL!

BUT WE HAVE ONLY YOUR WORD! WE HAVE SEEN THAT THESE STRANGE WARRIORS ARE TOO POWERFUL AND TOO CLEVER! THEIR PLAN IS PERFECT! NOTHING CAN STOP THEM!



AFTER A MONTH HAD PASSED, THE INVADERS SENT ONE OF MY TRIBE TO THE EXPORTER TO FIND OUT HOW MANY OF THE STATUES HAD BEEN PURCHASED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD/ AND WHEN HE RETURNED...

THE NATIVE EARTH-LING REPORTS THAT THE EXPORTER TOLD HIM ALL THE STATUES HAVE BEEN SOLD!

NOW IS THE TIME! SIGNAL THEM TO STRIKE!--TO CAPTURE THE EARTHLINGS WHO BOUGHT THEM!



THE SIGNAL WAS SENT TO THE "SOLDIER-STATUES" IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD!

OUR MEN ARE RECEIVING THE ULTRA-DYNAMIC IMPULSES NOW, GENERAL! -- WITHIN SECONDS WE'LL BE GETTING THEIR ANSWER-- TELLING US THEY RECEIVED OUR MESSAGE!

THIS IS IT! --THE BE-GINNING OF OUR PLANET'S DEFEAT...!



BUT THERE WAS NO ANSWER FROM THOSE WHO HAD DISGUISED THEMSELVES AS STATUES!

I DON'T UNDER- STAND... I'M SURE I GOT THROUGH TO OUR MEN! BUT THEY DON'T ANSWER...!

KEEP TRYING --WE MUST HEAR FROM THEM, OR WE CAN'T GO THROUGH WITH OUR PLAN!



ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT, THE GENERAL AND HIS MEN STAYED BY THEIR MACHINE... TRYING TO RECEIVE WORD FROM THE SOLDIERS WHO HAD BEEN SENT OUT INTO OUR WORLD! FINALLY, MORNING CAME...

MY WARRIORS! WE ARE UNABLE TO MAKE CONTACT WITH OUR SECRET ADVANCE FORCE! SOME UNKNOWN TRAGEDY MUST HAVE BEFALLEN THEM!

IN VIEW OF THIS, I'M ORDERING THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF OUR FORCES! WE'RE GOING BACK TO OUR HOME PLANET!



NOW, LOOKING AT US WITH QUIET RESPECT, THE WARRIORS SET US FREE... AND DEPARTED FROM OUR WORLD!

GO THE INVADERS... BACK TO THEIR OWN PLANET!

IT HAPPENED JUST AS YOU SAID, KISUMU! BUT, HOW DID YOU KNOW?? HOW COULD YOU TELL IT WOULD WORK OUT THIS WAY?



BECAUSE I KNOW THAT THE PEOPLE WHO BUY OUR WOODEN STATUES DESIRE THEM TO BE HIGHLY POLISHED--THEY LIKE THE WOOD TO SHINE! AND SO, BEFORE THE EXPORTER SENDS THEM TO THE GREAT NATIONS OVERSEAS...



... HE TWICE PUTS A COAT OF SPECIAL VARNISH ON THEM! VARNISH MAKES THINGS SHINE... BUT HIS ALSO MAKES THINGS STIFF! IF A LIVING BEING WAS COATED WITH THAT VARNISH, HE WOULD BE UNABLE TO MOVE! AND THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE INVADERS -- THEY ARE ALIVE, BUT POWERLESS TO MOVE!!

NOW THEY ARE TRULY AFRICAN STATUES!



THE END

I'M A BUSINESS MAN; A SUCCESSFUL ONE BECAUSE I'M NOT EASY TO CONVINCE! I CAN'T BE SOFT SOAPED OR FLATTERED INTO ANY DEAL I DON'T CONSIDER SOUND! NOBODY PULLS THE WOOL OVER MY EYES! OR SO I THOUGHT, UNTIL THAT FATEFUL DAY WHEN...

**I DARED TO
DEFY
MERLIN'S...**

**BLACK!
MAGIC!**

I WARNED
YOU NOT
TO TAMPER
WITH
"MERLIN'S
DIARY"!

SOMETHING'S
RISING OUT OF
THE PAGES!

THE FOOL HAS UN-
LEASHED MY MAGIC
POWERS! NOW LET
HIM BEWARE!



SPRING IN THE BALKANS! I HAD JUST CLOSED A BIG DEAL FOR MY COMPANY AND WAS DOING A LITTLE SIGHT-SEEING BEFORE CATCHING A PLANE HOME!

A CURIO SHOP! I MIGHT
AS WELL KILL SOME
TIME IN THERE!



THE SHOP WAS FILLED
WITH ODD STATUES...
IT WAS DARK, MUSTY...
AND SEEMED SOMEHOW
AGELESS!

HMPH! NOBODY AROUND!
WHAT A WAY TO RUN A
BUSINESS! ANYBODY
HERE??





AH, AN AMERICAN! GOOD DAY, MEIN HERR, HOW MAY I SERVE YOU?

I JUST WANT TO LOOK AT YOUR COLLECTION!

HMPH!--
CREEPY
OLD
CUSS!



THESE ARE ALL REAL MASTERWORKS, EACH WITH A STORY OF ITS OWN! SOME ARE VERY STRANGE AND UNBELIEVABLE! FOR INSTANCE, THAT--

SAVE THE FABLES AND SALES TALK FOR THE REGULAR TOURISTS! YOUR COUNTRY'S NOTED FOR ITS BLACK MAGIC AND STRANGE LEGENDS; BUT TO ME, IT'S ALL BUNK!



MEIN HERR DOES NOT BELIEVE IN THE OCCULT AND MYSTIC ARTS?

NO! AND DON'T START TELLING ME ABOUT ANY! YOUR OLD WIVES TALES BELONG IN THE MIDDLE AGES-- NOT TODAY!



MAYBE THEY DO, MEIN HERR, AND ...MAYBE NOT!



YOU MUST BE VERY WISE, TO BE SO VERY SURE OF YOUR BELIEFS!

WISER THAN ANY OLD PEASANT!!! HMPH-- NOTHING WORTHWHILE HERE!



THEN I SAW IT!-- ON A DUSTY COB-WEBBED SHELF! A BOOK, LEATHER BOUND AND BEAUTIFULLY HAND CARVED! IT WAS INDEED A WORK OF ART! BACK IN THE STATES, I COULD GET A SMALL FORTUNE FOR IT!

HMPH! THIS BOOK!-- HA! HA! "MERLIN'S DIARY" --HOW MUCH FOR IT?

"MERLIN'S DIARY"! NO! NO! THAT'S NOT FOR SALE... ANYTHING ELSE IN THE SHOP... BUT NOT THAT!



MY BRAIN REFUSED TO BELIEVE THE EVIDENCE OF MY EYES AND EARS!! THERE *HAD* TO BE AN EXPLANATION!

THIS IS SOME KIND OF A TRICK-- THAT SHOPKEEPER HYPNOTIZED ME...OR SLIPPED ME A MICKEY!

NAYE! MY *MAGIC POWERS* HAVE BROUGHT YOU HERE-- TO THE PAST, UNBELIEVER!



HOG WASH! WHAT KIND OF A FOOL DO YOU TAKE ME FOR? QUIT PLAYING GAMES WITH ME!

THIS IS NO TRICK OR GAME! YOU ARE AFRAID TO BELIEVE ALL THIS IS POSSIBLE-- THAT SUCH *MAGIC POWERS DO EXIST!* IF YOU COULD REMAIN WITH ME, YOU WOULD COME TO BELIEVE IT!



BUT THERE ARE LAWS THAT CANNOT BE BROKEN, EVEN BY BLACK MAGIC! YOU DO NOT BELONG IN THIS AGE SO I MUST SEND YOU BACK TO YOUR OWN TIME! ALL THIS WILL SEEM LIKE ONLY A DREAM TO YOU-- BUT--



--YOU WILL COME TO BELIEVE WHEN YOU SEE THE "SIGN"-- YOU WILL REALIZE THAT THE MYSTIC ARTS *DO* EXIST!



BUT FEW ARE THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW AND USE THEM!! FEW... FEW... FEW...

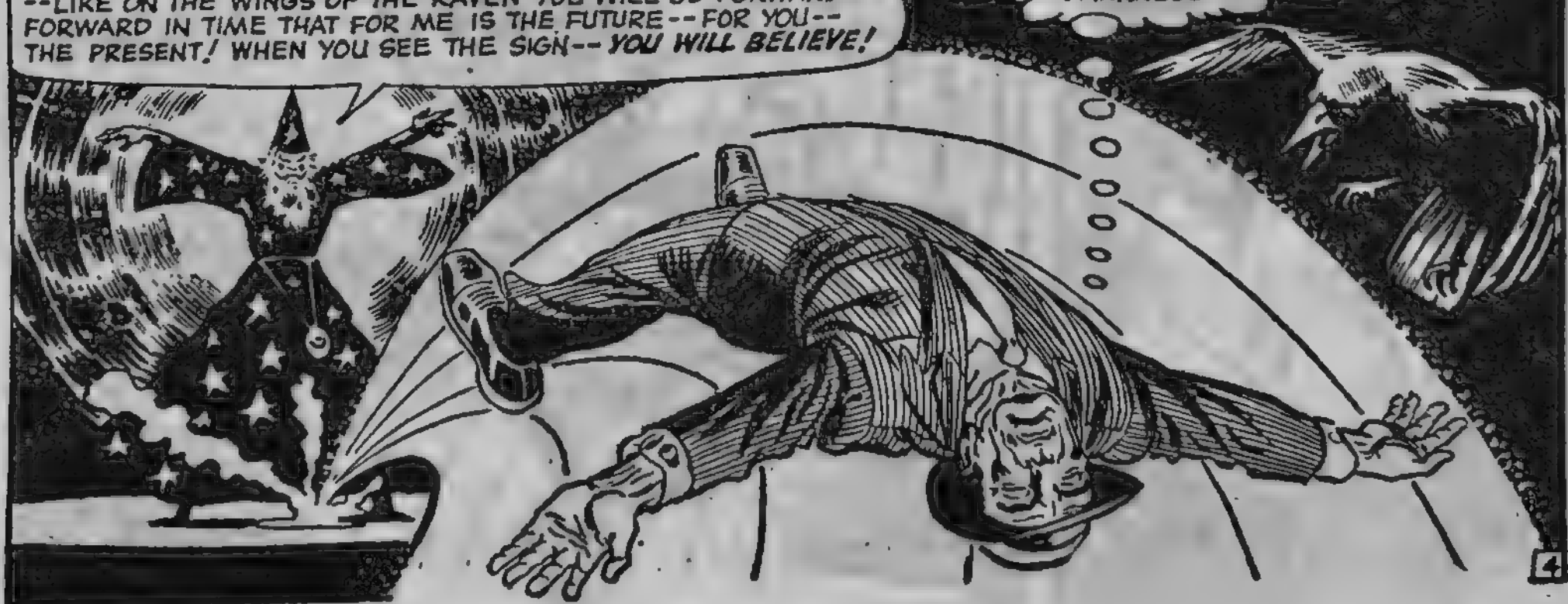
BEGINNING TO GET DIZZY!



MERLIN SPOKE STRANGE WORDS, MADE ODD GESTURES AND ONCE MORE I WAS BEING CARRIED AWAY AS THE DARKNESS CLOSED OVER ME!

--LIKE ON THE WINGS OF THE RAVEN YOU WILL GO FORWARD-- FORWARD IN TIME THAT FOR ME IS THE FUTURE-- FOR YOU-- THE PRESENT! WHEN YOU SEE THE SIGN-- YOU WILL BELIEVE!

I'M FLOATING-- FADING INTO DARKNESS--



WHEN MY VISION AGAIN BECAME CLEAR I WAS BACK IN THE CURIO SHOP!

WHA--BAH! I'VE BEEN WORKING TOO HARD ON THIS BALKAN CONTRACT! I'M BEGINNING TO IMAGINE THINGS! NOW WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR THAT PHONEY BOOK?

HAVEN'T YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSON YET? IT'S NOT FOR SALE!



WHEN I GO AFTER SOMETHING, NOTHING STANDS IN MY WAY!! NOW--WAIT!!! MY HAIR! IT'S ALL WHITE!



IN MY MIND, THERE WAS A FAINT MEMORY, A DREAM OF THE MEETING OF MERLIN... BUT HIS WORDS THUNDERED IN MY BRAIN: "YOU WILL SEE THE SIGN--YOU WILL BELIEVE!"

HOW... HOW DID MY HAIR TURN WHITE?

ONLY YOU CAN ANSWER THAT-- IF YOU ARE NOT AFRAID TO BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF!



I--EXCUSE ME--I--I'D BETTER LEAVE NOW!!



THERE IS SO MUCH I HAVE TO THINK ABOUT!--SO MUCH!!



YES, THINK, AND YOU WILL SOON KNOW THE TRUTH!! FOR THE SUPERNATURAL STILL EXISTS AND IT IS NOT TO BE DEFIED! AND NOW--

--MY DIARY MUST BE KEPT OUT OF SIGHT! IT WAS FOOLISH FOR ME TO LET MY ANGER AND PRIDE GIVE A MORTAL A CLUE-- TO MY REAL IDENTITY!!



THE END

T.V. INVASION

JOHNNY was tired of his reputation as the kid brother who was always getting in people's hair.

"Why can't I help you out in the television shop, Bob," he pleaded with his older brother. "You know how I love to tinker around with mechanical things."

"Sure! You're a whiz at getting gizmos out of order faster than anyone I know."

Bob grinned, but seeing the downcast look on Johnny's face, he relented. "Tell you what . . . A service call just came in from Edgemere. I'll hustle with the chassis I'm working on now, and I'll take you with me tonight on the Edgemere call. Grow yourself a set of wings in the meantime, and if you're real good, I may let you change a tube or two."

Johnny's spirits took a power dive and crash-landed him into a deep blue mood. He had to prove to Bob that he could help out on his own. He could probably handle the service call out in Edgemere without the least trouble. He would save Bob the trip and . . . His little day dream was too practical to toss away. He would do it! If he ran into any snags, he would take the TV set back to the shop with him, and that would be worth at least an A for effort.

"I'm going out for a soda," he called to Bob, who had already gone down to the basement of the store where he ran his workshop. Johnny took a pad and

hurriedly scribbled the Edgemere address from Bob's call sheet. He picked up the handle of Bob's repair kit and left the store with the importance of a doctor about to perform his first mission of mercy.

Johnny drove the truck very carefully to the outskirts of town. Edgemere was a remote, rundown section of town, but Johnny was taken aback by the ramshackle building that answered to the call sheet address. Some of the windows of the house were boarded up, and the front lawn looked like a tangled jungle thicket.

He rang the bell, almost uncertain if anyone really lived in the place. His amazement grew when the door opened abruptly. A woman accompanied by several noisy kids tugging at her apron stared out at him.

"I'm the TV repair man," he said in a small voice.

"It's about time," she snapped. "I've been tempted to call someone in to fix their set without them knowing it. I never did hear such a racket and clanging. I'm the landlady here, and I've got other tenants to think about. People living out here like peace and quiet, but those two fellas make such a racket with that broken-down set. Always trying to fix it themselves, I figure. Wait, I'll get the key to their room. They're not home now."

Johnny tried to follow her

down the hallway, but the kids pulled at his tool box as if it were a locker full of candy. The landlady waved him back. "Now, you're not going to make a racket here fixing that set. I'll get it for you . . . it isn't very big for all the funny sounds that come out of it. You take it on back to your shop and fuss with it there. The Masters . . . two brothers they are, get in around seven o'clock at night. Leave a card and I'll have them get in touch with you."

She ran off and reappeared carrying a contraption that looked like a homemade egg crate with a porthole stuck in the center. Cheerfully, she thrust it at him. He staggered back to the truck, his feet tripping through the maze of wires looping down from the rear of the set.

Fortunately, Bob was still working in the basement when he returned. Tenderly, he placed the TV contraption he had just called for on a table at the rear of the store. He hooked it up to a tester.

At first he thought he had hooked himself up, judging from the wild blurps that poured from the set. Ambitiously, he got to work, joining coils and wires, absorbed in the wonderful experiment, using half the information Bob had taught him and half the guesses . . . the intuition part that he liked to teach himself. That's the dangerous way, the wrong way, Bob always scolded.

A wild rainbow of color filled the porthole screen. Circles inside of circles whirled and suddenly fused into the likeness of a man of metal bolts and riveted parts.

"These crazy commercials!" Johnny marveled.

"It is almost time for the Masters to beam us in on the Earth planet. All metal men of Mechania be sure to listen tonight to the great invasion plans of our Master spies. They will brief us tonight, and the great forces of Mechania will conquer Earth."

The mechanical man talked! A loud jangling noise accompanied the metallic ring of the voice, as the arms of the metal man gestured.

Johnny's mouth fell open. He could hardly speak when Bob dashed upstairs, attracted by the noisy clatter of the Mechania television set.

"Where did you get that thing!" he shouted.

Johnny explained as best he could, while the two of them watched in fascination as the armies of Mechania performed a mass drill demonstration on the screen.

"It's a mixup," said Bob. You had the address right, but the landlady gave you the wrong TV set. A woman by the name of Peters called. The landlady assumed it was Masters because she heard the muffled sounds of what we just saw! Do you realize our entire planet is in danger?"

"Planet, nothing! What about us? When these guys Masters find out . . ."

Bob unplugged the set from the wall. He rushed to the phone. "Let me have the police . . . the F.B.I. . . anyone. Look, my brother and I need protection. We . . ."

"It's too late," Johnny said. "They're here. Maybe we can bluff them for a while."

The front door had opened and two very tall, brotherly looking men stalked toward them. They moved their legs and arms at the same time, and their features were very sharp.

"We have come for our television set. We are the Masters."

"You're welcome to it," said Bob. "It was taken by mistake. My brother . . ."

"Let us not waste time. You are Earth Spies against



Mechania. You thought you would find us out, but we are prepared to send you into Mechania as our prisoners. At seven o'clock, we will beam you in, and the metaxial cable will convert you through the atmosphere and deposit you into our Sphere."

"You've got us all wrong," Bob protested. "If this is a big joke . . ."

"It is not a big joke, if you look at the Mechania trans-television set. It is wired and put together for perfect contact as only an expert could accomplish."

The words of praise were small comfort to Johnny. Gloomily he watched as the Masters bent over the set. One plugged it into the wall while

the other adjusted the dials. The metal man from Mechania came into focus, then blurred away.

"That's easily fixed," said Johnny. "A simple screwdriver . . ."

"Hurry up and perfect this picture. Mechania will make it worth your while . . ."

Johnny's screwdriver contacted the set. A loud roar and a series of sparks shot through the room.

The welcome sight of two competent policemen pulling them from the smoke-filled room renewed Johnny's hope in the future. The police had traced the call after Bob hung up.

"What happened here?" they asked.

"I guess it's my fault," Johnny admitted. "I shorted the power tube on this set and . . ."

"Now, listen, kid," advised the policeman wisely, "you've gotta be crazy to connect with a power tube. That can blow you right off this earth. Any fool knows that."

Bob put his arm around Johnny's shoulder as they walked back into the store. "Someday, after we get this story to the proper authorities, I'll see to it that you get the credit you deserve. You remembered about the power tube exploding, and you destroyed the Mechania plot when you ruined their invasion weapon . . . that TV set. To me, you're a hero. Say, what's that?"

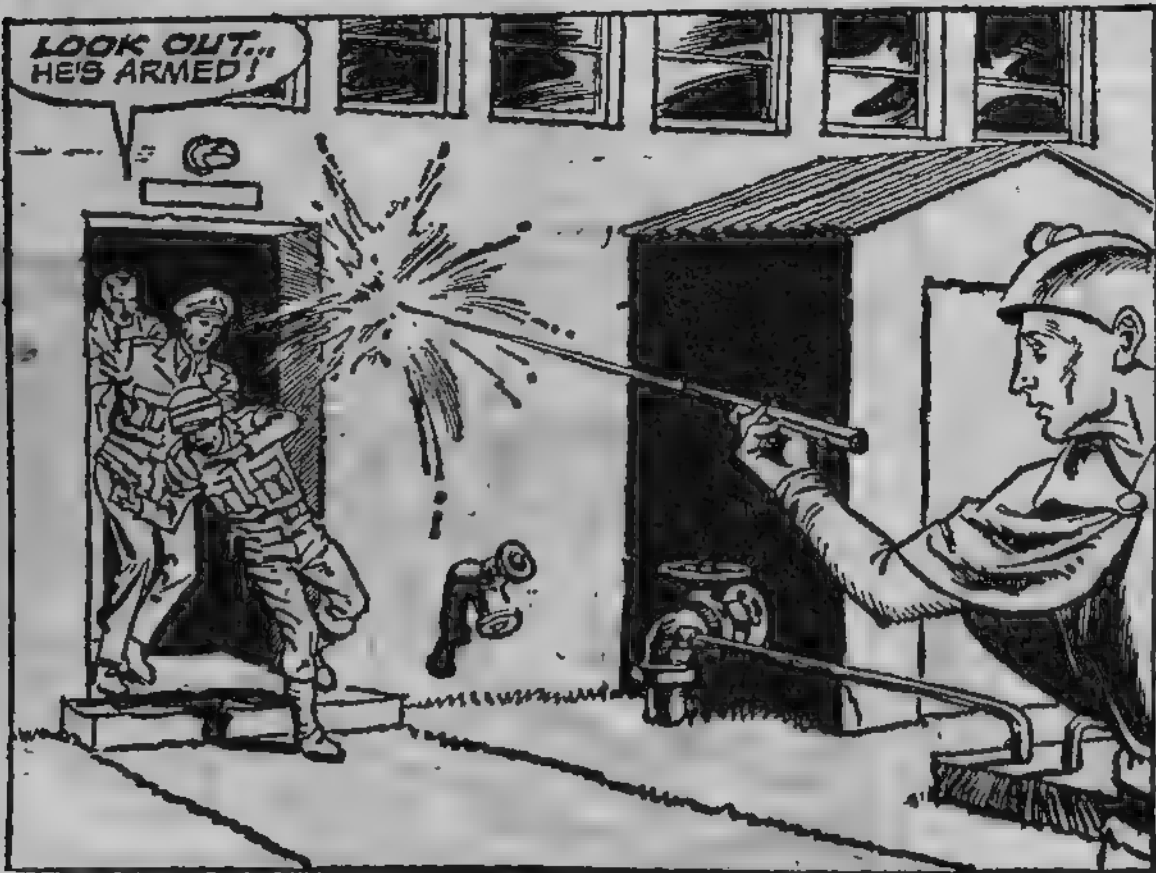
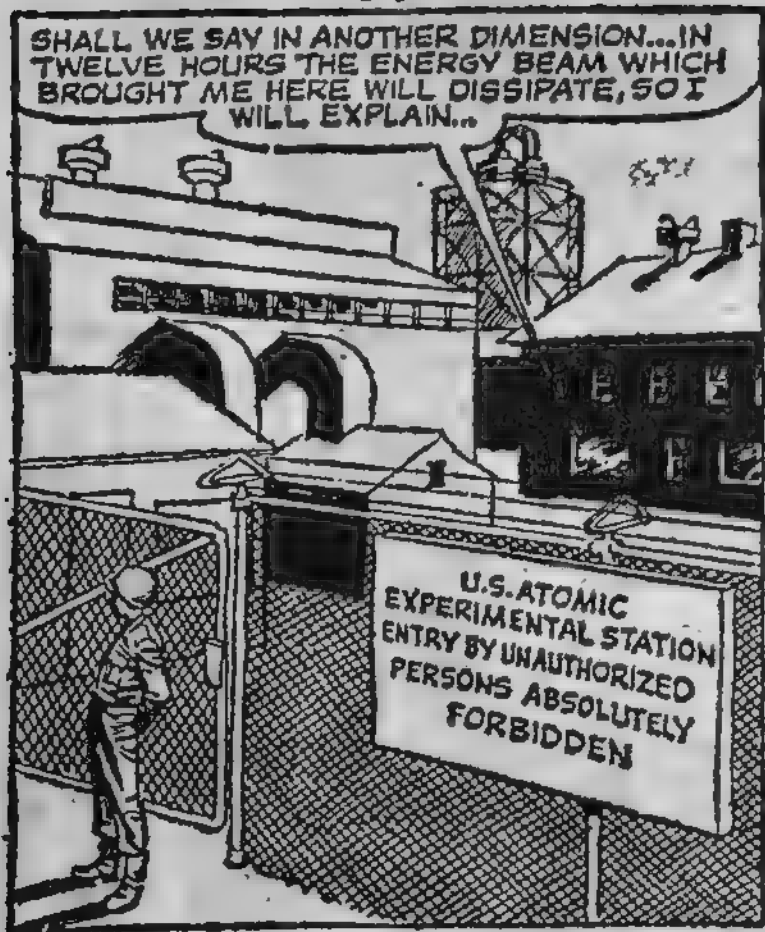
On the floor where each of the Masters had stood were two round metal discs.

Johnny picked them up and tossed one to Bob. "A medal for you and a medal for me. That makes us both heroes."

PROCTOR WAS A PHYSICIST, A
BRILLIANT MATHEMATICIAN! BUT
HE WILL NEVER FIND THE ANSWER
TO THE RIDDLE THE STRANGER
LEFT HIM...

AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT!







MAYBE NOT, BUT WE NEVER GAVE HIM A CHANCE! I DON'T LIKE IT! HOW DID HE GET PAST THE GUARDS?

I DON'T KNOW! BUT I'M HEAD OF THIS STATION... I'LL MAKE THE DECISIONS!



DAGON! YOU CAN'T GET AWAY! I THINK YOU'RE A SPY, BUT WALTERS HERE IS ON YOUR SIDE! IF YOU'RE MORE THAN HUMAN... PROVE IT!

NO! I CAME AS A FRIEND... BUT IT WAS A MISTAKE!



MAN IS NOT READY FOR WHAT I BRING! MAN IS STILL AFRAID, SUSPICIOUS... SO PERHAPS IT IS BEST THIS WAY!

I KNEW IT! HE CAN'T PROVE IT... BECAUSE IT ISN'T SO! HE'S A SPY! A CLEVER ONE, BUT STILL A SPY!



GET AFTER HIM! WE'VE GOT TO FIND HIM! THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT DAMAGE HE MAY DO!

THERE HE GOES!



THE REACTOR ROOM! WE CAN'T FOLLOW HIM IN THERE! IF WE FIRE AND HIT THE REACTOR, THE WHOLE STATION MAY BLOW UP!

I KNOW... BUT HE'S TRAPPED HIMSELF! THAT DOOR IS THE ONLY WAY HE CAN GET OUT! ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS WAIT!



So... HE'S IN THERE SEVEN HOURS! WHY DOESN'T HE COME OUT?

HE'S TRYING TO WEAR US DOWN! HE PROBABLY THINKS WE'RE CONCERNED WITH THAT STORY OF HIS ABOUT GOING BACK TO HIS OWN WORLD AT MIDNIGHT!



DAGON, IT WON'T WORK! IF YOU THINK WE'LL SWALLOW YOUR FAIRY TALE FOR FEAR YOU'LL DISAPPEAR AT MIDNIGHT... YOU'RE WRONG!

I CAN'T HELP WONDERING IF HE'S STILL IN THERE!



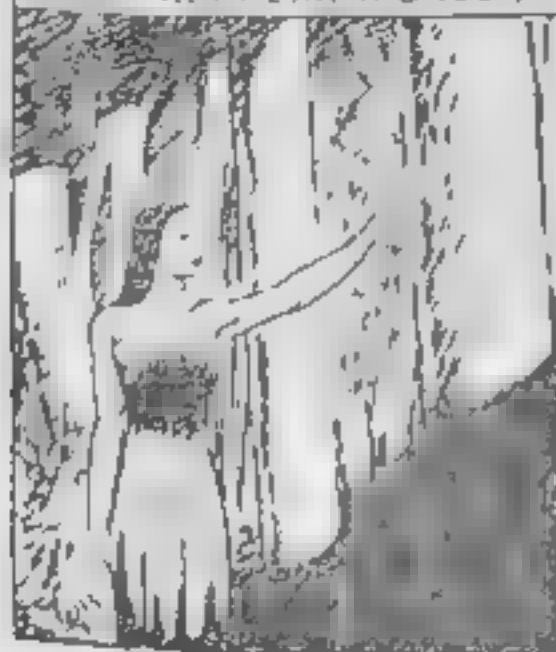
LOOK OUT!
IT'S...

WILDFIRE!



STORY: SVEN LARSEN ART: EDD ASHE
PUBLISHED BY...

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF
EARTH'S HISTORY THERE
WERE SPIRITS SOME WERE
GOOD LIKE THE RAIN SPIRIT
WHICH KEPT EARTH GREEN



OR LIKE THE WOODLAND
SPIRITS THAT PROTECTED
SMALL ANIMALS



BUT THERE WERE OTHERS. PER-
NATURAL FORCES LIKE
WILDFIRE THE SPIRIT OF
RAGING FLAME





HA-HA-
HA!



THEN, THERE WERE SUCH FALLEN ANGELS AS
LUCIFER -- SATAN TO YOU --

EARTH---IT SHALL BE THE
SOURCE OF THE SPIRITS
WHICH WILL MAKE UP
MY EVIL DOMAIN!



REMEMBER, IMPS, THAT I
AM THE **PRINCE OF
DARKNESS**. FAR BELOW
THIS EARTH SHALL LIE MY
EMPIRE, WHERE CONDEMNED
SPIRITS SHALL BE PUNISHED...



...PLISHED
IN **FLAMING
FURNACES!**

FLAMING
FURNACES, EH? SO
HE THINKS HE'LL MAKE
USE OF MY WEAPON! I'LL
BIDE MY TIME --AND THEN
SHOW HIM!



I'LL TAKE OVER--
THE DOMAIN WHICH
SATAN CLAIMS SHALL
BE MINE, **ALL
MINE!**

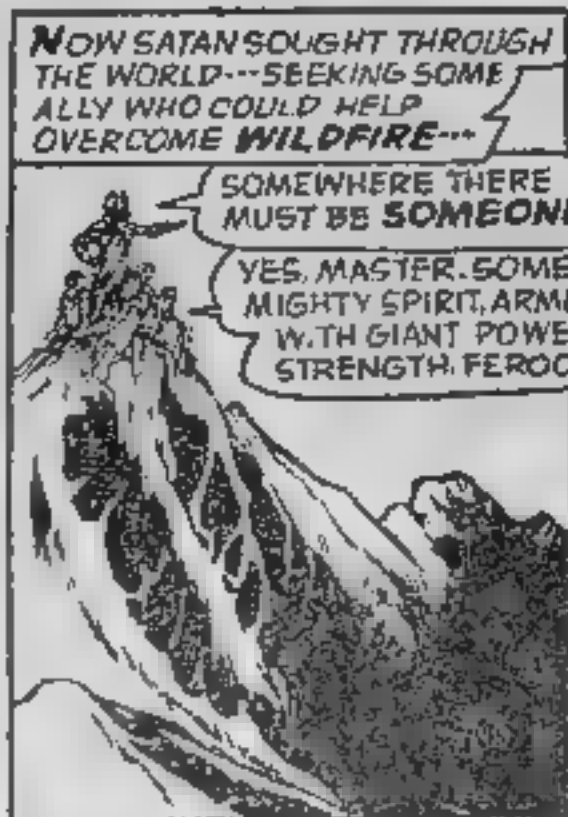


TIME PASSED. SATAN HAD JUST
COMPLETED THE BUILDING OF HIS
UNDERWORLD EMPIRE --

ALL'S IN
READINESS. NOW
--FIRE THE
FURNACE!



THAT'S IT -- BUILD THE
FLAMES HIGHER! MORE
COAL---FOR THE SOULS
THAT ARE COMING!



AND THEN SATAN SAW THE ANSWER...THE ICE SPIRIT!

I'M THE GOD OF FROST... LET ME SHOW YOU MY STRENGTH!

KEEP KEEP AWAY OLD MAN.

KEEP AWAY? HOW COULD I FREEZE THE LIFE FROM YOU? THEN? HA-HA!

I'M TOO STRONG FOR YOU NOBODY! CAN I GHT THE ICE SPIRIT!

BUT SATAN POSSESSED ANOTHER POWER THE GIFT OF MAGIC! AND BREAKING LOOSE DESPERATELY HE USED IT!

I'LL GET YOU...

NOT WHILE I CAN STILL USE A SPELL!

YOU'RE UNDER MY POWER... UNDER MY POWER...

ARGH!

NOW SATAN HAD AN UNWILLING ACCOMPLICE...AND A PLAN IN WHICH TO USE HIM...

WHERE WHERE ARE WE GOING --?

HADES!

ALL THIS WAS MINE... AND SHALL BE AGAIN, IF WE ARE SUCCESSFUL!

CRASH!



SO... YOU DARE
TO RETURN!
I'LL TEACH
YOU...

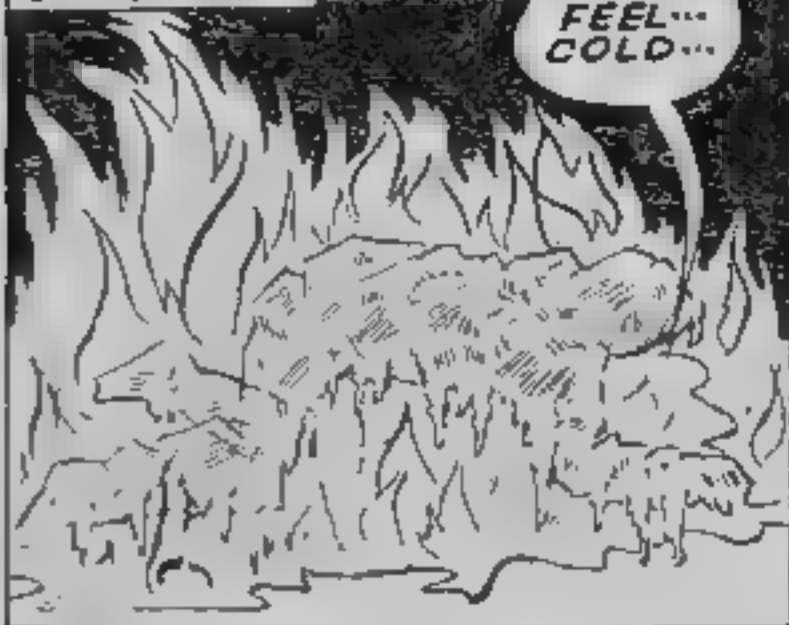
ICE SPIRIT!
QUICK... COME
TO MY
AID!



WHOMEVER YOU'VE
BROUGHT HE HASN'T
A CHANCE AGAINST
ME!

OH, NO?
WE'LL
SEE!

WILDFIRE WAS EXPERIENCING SOMETHING
NEW NOW. WHERE WAS HIS MIGHTY
STRENGTH? INSTEAD, AN ICY PARALYSIS
SEEMED TO BE SPREADING OVER HIM...
SPREADING...



FEEL...
COLD...



THERE ' I'VE
CONQUERED WILDFIRE
... JUST LOOK AT
HIM!



THIS IS THE DEEPEST,
STRONGEST DUNGEON
IN ALL HADES. PUT
HIM ASIDE!

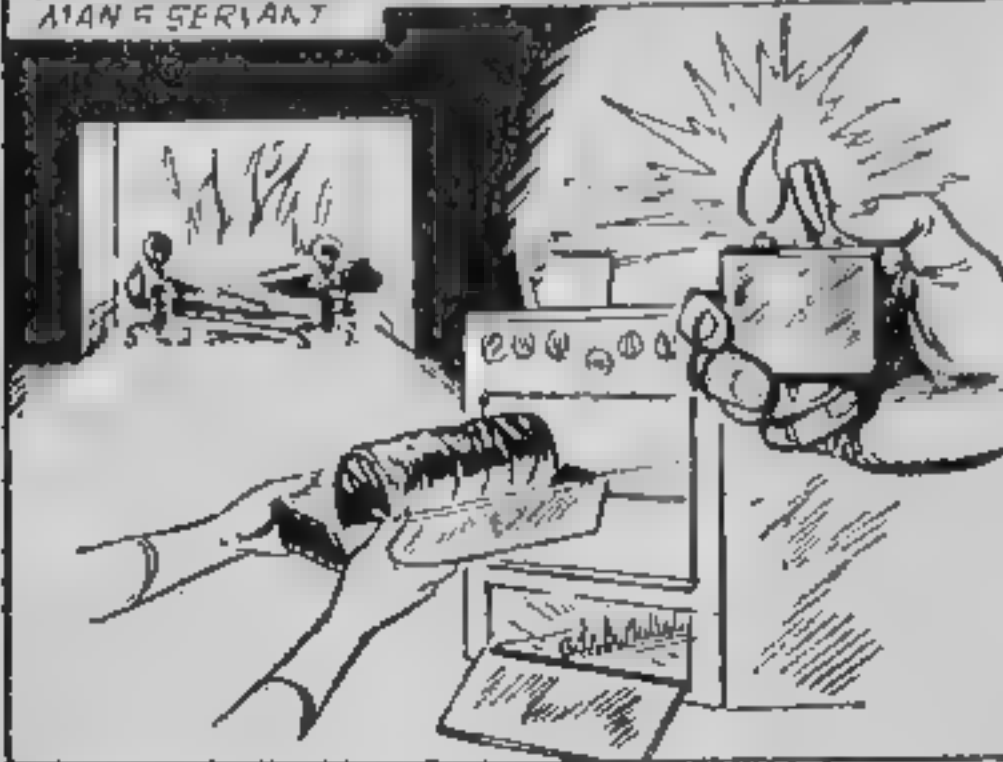


I'VE TURNED THE
LOCKS AND BARS TO
ICE. HE'LL BE SAFE
IN HERE THROUGHOUT
ETERNITY!



AND SO THE COUNTLESS
CENTURIES PASSED WITH
WILDFIRE A HELPLESS
PRISONER...

AND ON EARTH, FIRE WAS TAMED IT HAD BECOME
MAN'S SERVANT



BUT SOMETIMES, IN THE LONG NIGHTS,
NIGHTMARES WOULD SHAKE THE
PRISONER IN HADES...



...AND IT WAS THEN THAT JUST A LITTLE OF THE
OLD POWER WOULD RETURN...AND MOMENTARILY,
FIRE WOULD ROAR OUT OF CONTROL



AND AT SUCH TIMES AS THIS,
IN WARFARE...



BUT ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT SUCH
MANIFESTATIONS ARE ONLY MOMENTARY
...THAT FIRE HAS BEEN ENSLAVED! JUST
SUPPOSING, HOWEVER, THAT THESE
NIGHTMARES SHOULD WAKEN THE
FIRE GOD...

I'M... A
PRISONER
... NO
LONGER!



IF THIS SHOULD EVER HAPPEN
...BEWARE, EARTH!

LOOK
OUT! IT'S...
WILDFIRE!



THE
END

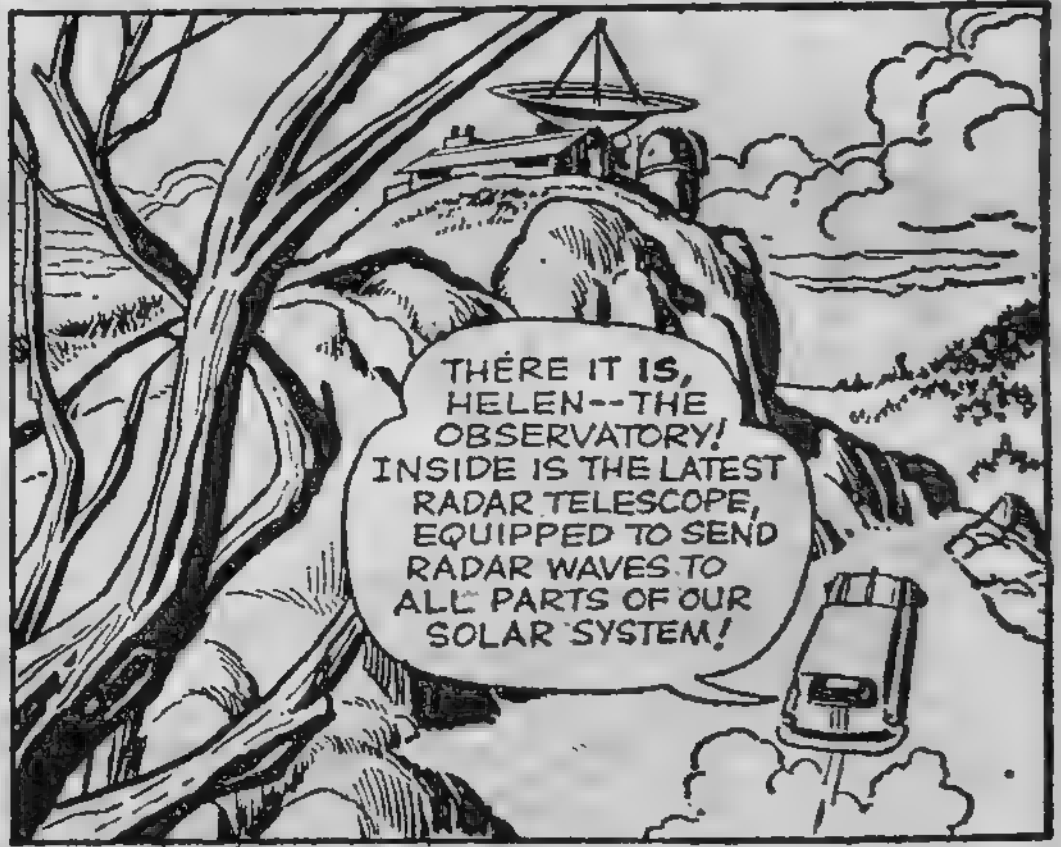
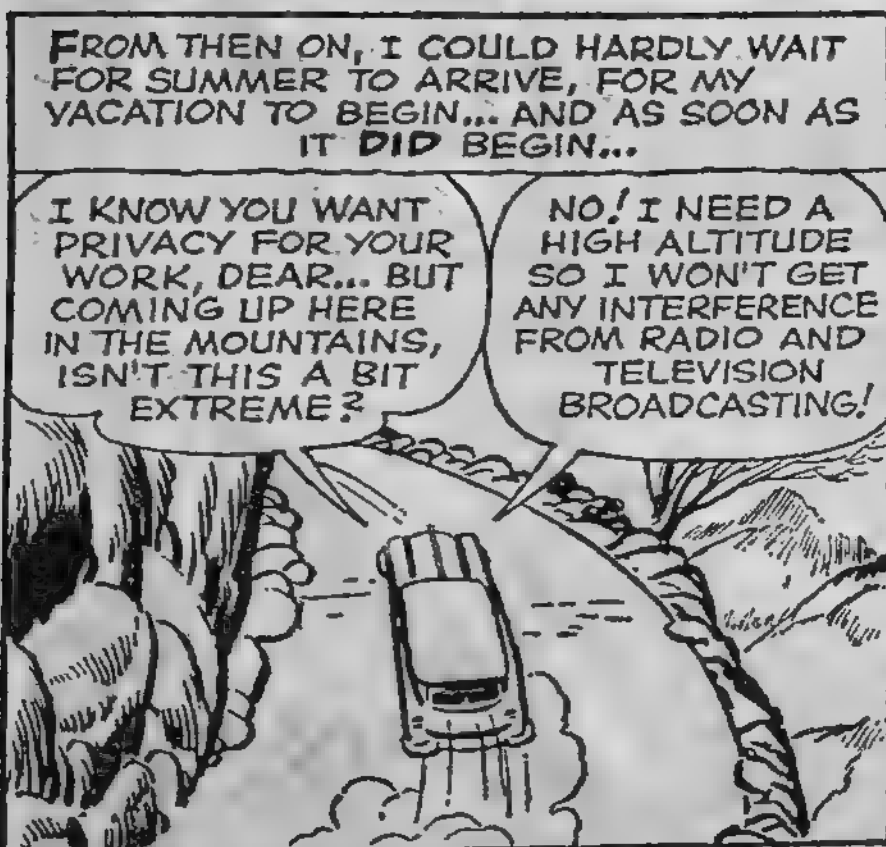
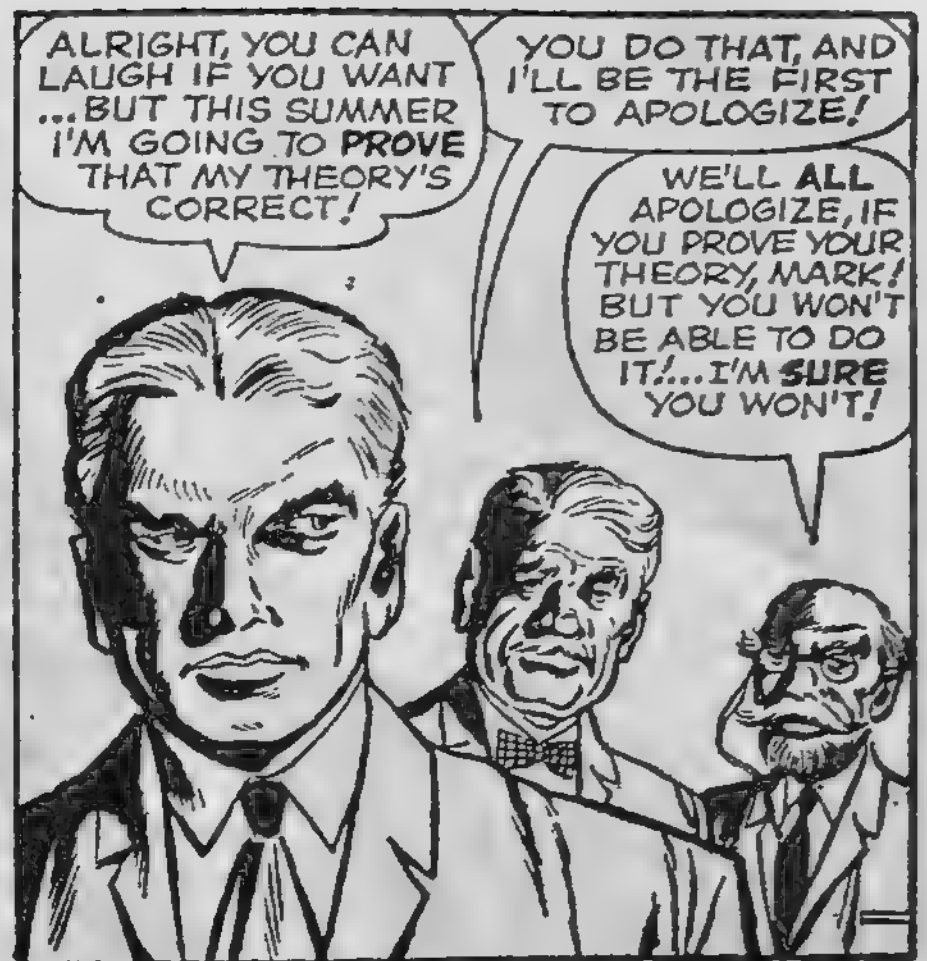


THE
THING
FROM
PLANET X

PART 1

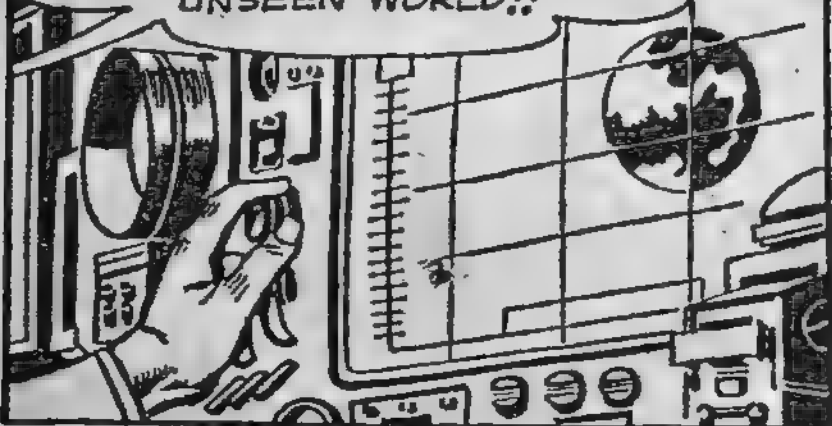
V-87

KIRBY
AYERS



FOR TWO DAYS I TRANSMITTED RADAR BEAMS WITHOUT SUCCESS, BUT THEN ON THE THIRD DAY...

THAT "BLIP" ON THE SCREEN-- IT'S SO LARGE IT MUST BE A PLANET--YES, IT IS! A GIGANTIC PLANET JUST BEYOND JUPITER!! I'VE DONE IT! I'VE DISCOVERED THE FIRST UNSEEN WORLD!!

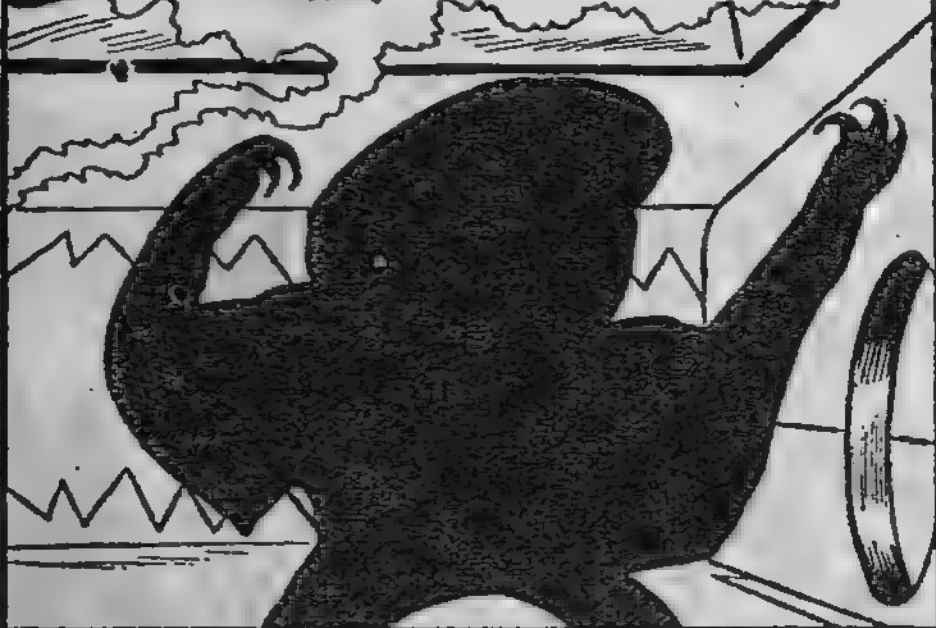


NOW I MUST LEARN IF THERE'S LIFE ON THE PLANET--IF THERE'S ANY INTELLIGENCE THERE, I'LL TRY TO COMMUNICATE WITH IT!



I TRANSMITTED RADIO SIGNALS AT REGULAR INTERVALS, HOPING TO RECEIVE SOME ANSWER FROM THE STRANGE PLANET... BUT THERE WAS NO REPLY! LITTLE DID I DREAM WHAT WAS REALLY TAKING PLACE UP THERE!

THE FOOL WANTS TO COMMUNICATE... HE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT A DEADLY MISTAKE HE HAS MADE! BUT SOON HE WILL LEARN THE PRICE OF HIS ERROR!

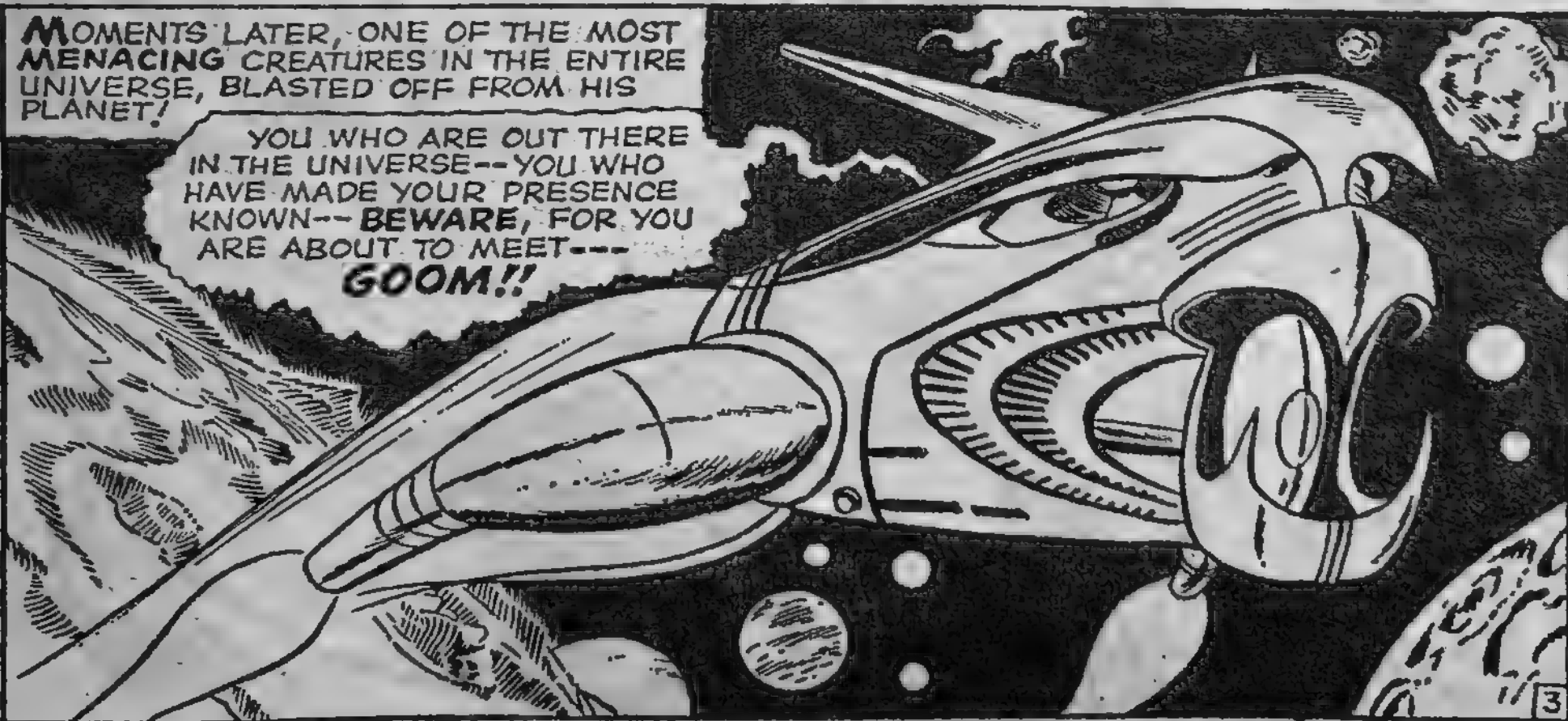


I SHALL FOLLOW HIS RADIO BEAM... IT WILL LEAD ME STRAIGHT TO HIS WORLD... THERE, I SHALL GIVE HIM HIS ANSWER IN PERSON! HA! HA! HA!



MOMENTS LATER, ONE OF THE MOST MENACING CREATURES IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE, BLASTED OFF FROM HIS PLANET!

YOU WHO ARE OUT THERE IN THE UNIVERSE-- YOU WHO HAVE MADE YOUR PRESENCE KNOWN-- BEWARE, FOR YOU ARE ABOUT TO MEET--
GOOM!!



FOR THIRTY-SIX HOURS I CONTINUED TO BEAM RADIO SIGNALS AT THE GIANT PLANET... WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST SUSPICION THAT EVERY HOUR WAS BRINGING AN INCREDIBLE ENEMY CLOSER AND CLOSER TO EARTH...

STILL NO ANSWER FROM PLANET X! IT MUST BE AN UNINHABITED WORLD!

LISTEN... WHAT'S THAT SOUND??

WHIRRRRR!



WE RAN OUTSIDE--AND THERE IT WAS, LIKE A WINGED NIGHTMARE, THE FIRST ROCKET SHIP FROM OUTER SPACE!!



IT'S ENORMOUS!

THE NOISE OF ITS ENGINES--THOSE FLAMES--THE SHIP'S GOING TO LAND HERE!

WITH DEADLY ACCURACY, THE HUGE CRAFT DESCENDED, UNTIL ITS GREAT, PONDEROUS HULK MADE CONTACT WITH THE GROUND...

THE DOOR'S OPENING--

THE PILOT IS COMING OUT... HE'S... NO, NO... WHAT IS HE?!!



I AM GOOM!!



FOR AGES I HAD THOUGHT THE PLANET EARTH UNINHABITED, UNTIL YOU WERE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO SEND ME RADIO SIGNALS... SIGNALS WHICH I EASILY FOLLOWED UNTIL NOW I STAND HERE ON YOUR WORLD!

AND WHAT A SMALL, HELPLESS WORLD THIS IS!



COMPARED TO THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL ON MY WORLD, EARTH'S GRAVITY IS NOTHING! SEE HOW EASILY I DEFY IT!



LOOK AT HIM LEAP INTO THE AIR!

AS THOUGH HE WERE PROPELLED BY ROCKETS!

WHILE HELEN AND I STOOD AWE-STRICKEN, THE FANTASTIC FLOATING GIANT LAUGHED OMINOUSLY... FOR HE KNEW THIS WAS ONLY THE LEAST OF HIS INCREDIBLE POWERS...

BEHOLD, EARTHLINGS... BEHOLD THE MIGHTY GOOM! HA! HA! HA!



AS THE ALIEN COLOSSUS CAME DOWN AGAIN, I HELD MY WIFE FEARFULLY...

NO, THIS PUNY EARTH IS NO MATCH FOR THE STRENGTH OF GOOM! WITH BUT LITTLE EFFORT, I SHALL BE ABLE TO CONQUER ALL THAT IS ON THIS PLANET!



AND YOU TREMBLING EARTH CREATURES SHALL HAVE THE HONOR OF HELPING ME CONQUER YOUR WORLD! HA! HA! HA!



RUN, HELEN-- RUN!



HEAD FOR
THE WOODS!
OUR ONLY
CHANCE IS TO
HIDE THERE!

FOOLS, IT IS
USELESS TO
FLEE! YOU
CANNOT
ESCAPE
GOOM!!



WITH ENORMOUS STRIDES, THE BOUNDING
TITAN REACHED THE WOODS ALMOST AS
QUICKLY AS WE.

I SHALL FIND YOU IF I HAVE
TO DESTROY THIS ENTIRE
FOREST! DO YOU HEAR ME,
EARTHLINGS---YOU SHALL
NOT ESCAPE!

AND THEN, WITH INDESCRIBABLY SAVAGE
FURY, THE MADDENED GIANT ATTACKED
THE FOREST!



MARK--- HE'S TEARING
THE TREES RIGHT OUT
OF THE GROUND!

IT'S HOPELESS!
WE'RE
DOOMED!

THE BRUTAL WANTON DESTRUCTION WENT ON
AND ON UNTIL FINALLY THE MENACING MONSTER
FOUND US...



THAT'S RIGHT, EARTHLINGS...
COVER BEFORE THE ALL-
POWERFUL GOOM!

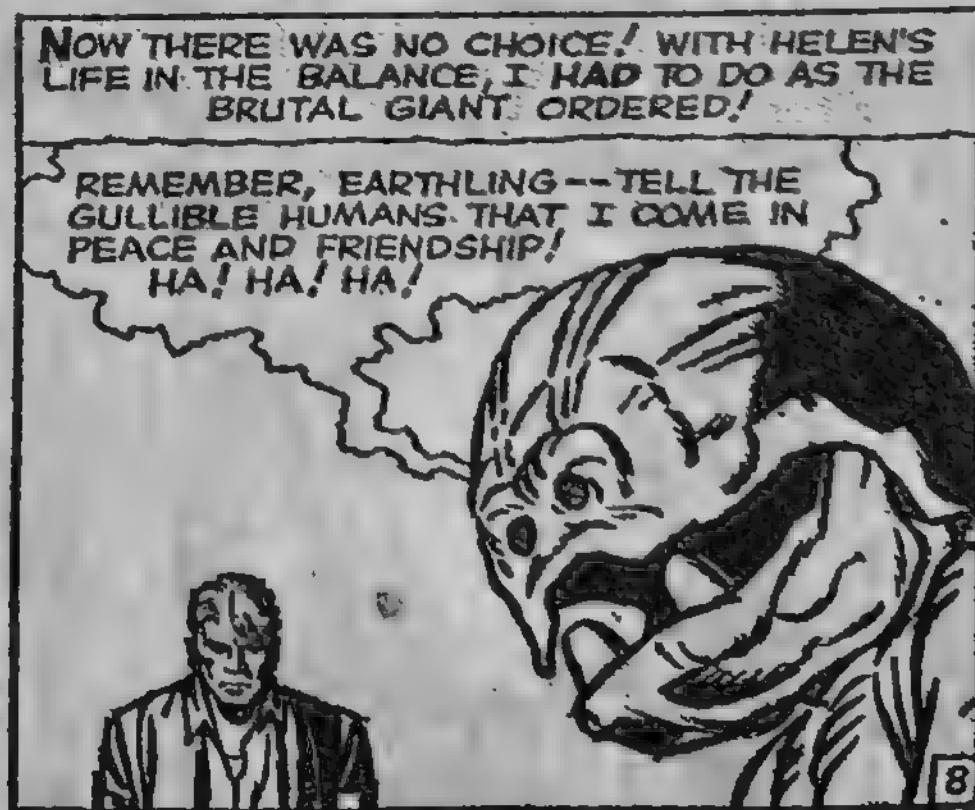
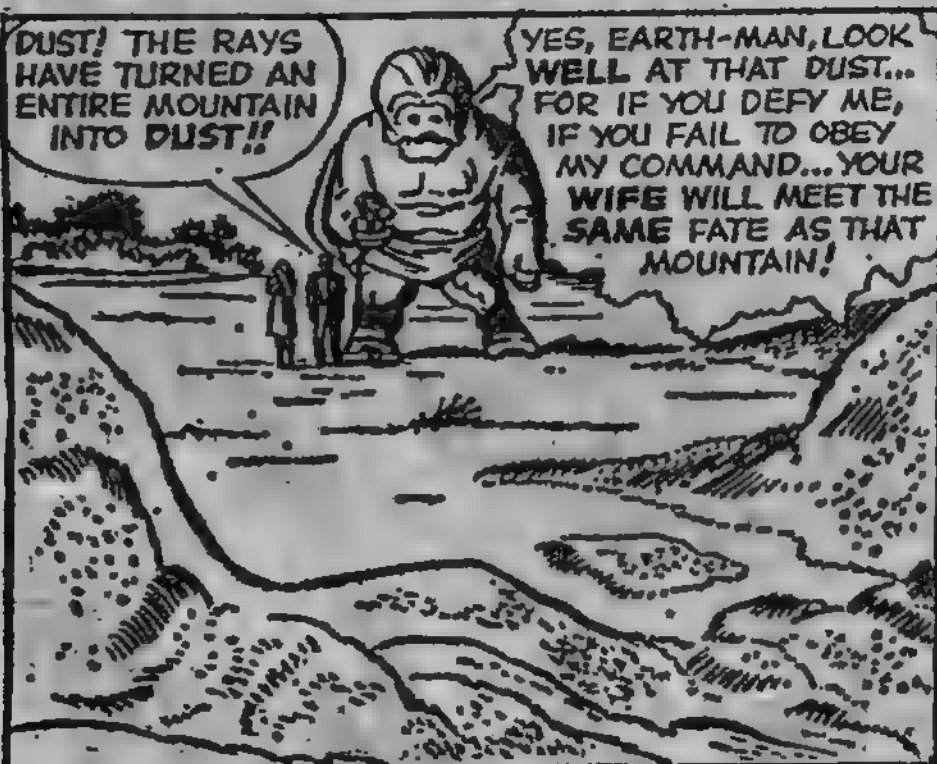
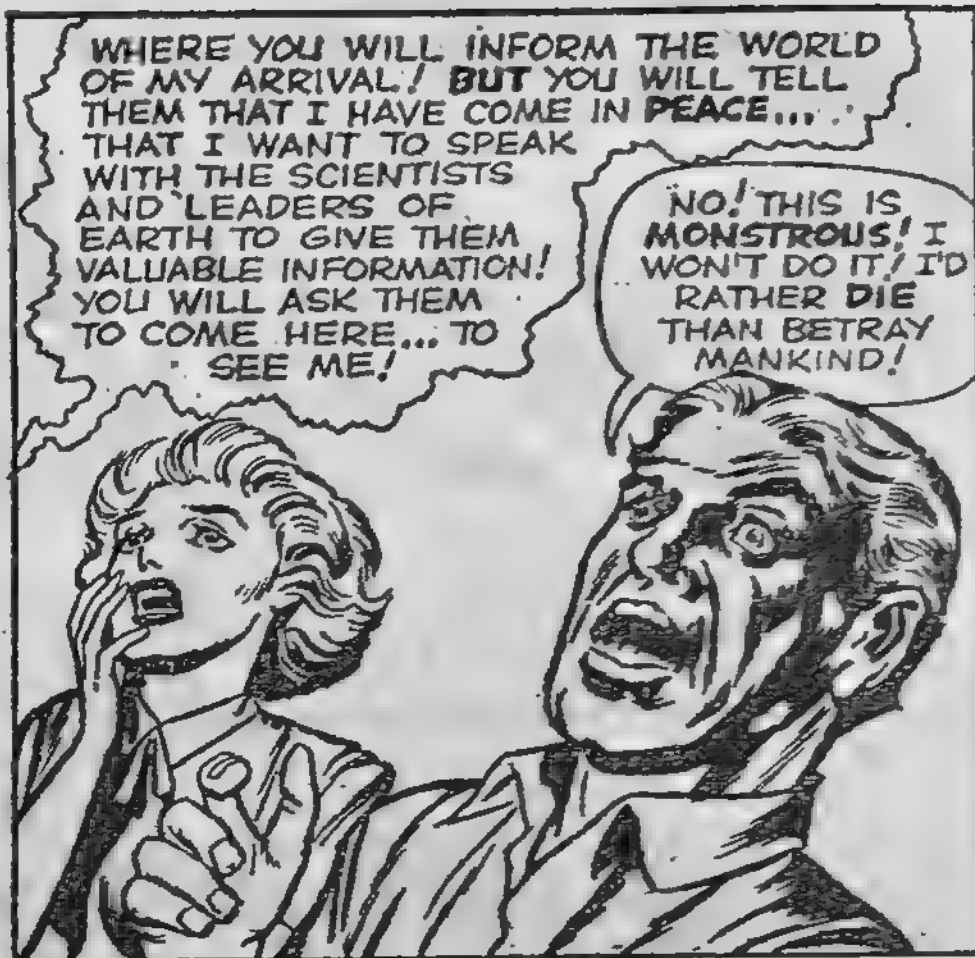


PART 2

WE HAVEN'T A
CHANCE! IT'S
USELESS TO
STRUGGLE!

HIS FINGERS ARE
LIKE STEEL--I
CAN'T BUDGE THEM!





WHEN I REACHED THE CITY, I GAVE GOOM'S MESSAGE TO MANKIND! IT WAS RECEIVED JUST AS THE ALIEN HAD ANTICIPATED!

MESSAGE FROM OUTER SPACE!

EXTRA! ALIEN FROM PLANET X LANDS ON EARTH!! MISSION PEACE! SCIENTISTS AND STATESMEN FROM ALL NATIONS GO TO GREET HIM! EXTRA!



BUT AS SOON AS HE HAD HIS AUDIENCE, GOOM ENDED THE PRETENSE...

I HAVE NOT COME TO EARTH IN PEACE-- I HAVE COME TO CONQUER EARTH! I SENT FOR YOU BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO PREPARE YOUR PEOPLE FOR THE NEW ORDER! YOU WILL INFORM YOUR NATIONS THAT FROM NOW ON, GOOM RULES MANKIND!



YOU MUST BE MAD!

WE'LL NEVER STAND FOR THIS!

GO BACK TO YOUR OWN WORLD, ALIEN!



YOU SPEAK BRAVELY, EARTHLINGS! LET US SEE HOW BRAVELY YOU WILL SPEAK AFTER YOU HAVE WITNESSED MY AWESOME POWERS!



THIS CABINET IS A TIME MACHINE-- DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER IN THE UNIVERSE! I SHALL DEMONSTRATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS!

NO! LET ME GO! PUT ME DOWN! SOMEBODY HELP ME!

BEFORE ANYONE COULD HELP THE STARTLED VICTIM, GOOM LOCKED HIM IN THE CABINET, AND...

THIS EARTHLING WILL GO BACK INTO TIME, AS WE WATCH HIM... SO!!



BEHOLD! THE EARTHLING GETS YOUNGER! HE IS GOING BACK THROUGH THE YEARS!



HE HAS NOW GONE THIRTY YEARS INTO HIS OWN PAST...



AND FINALLY HE IS ONCE AGAIN AN INFANT!

IF I HADN'T SEEN IT WITH MY OWN EYES...

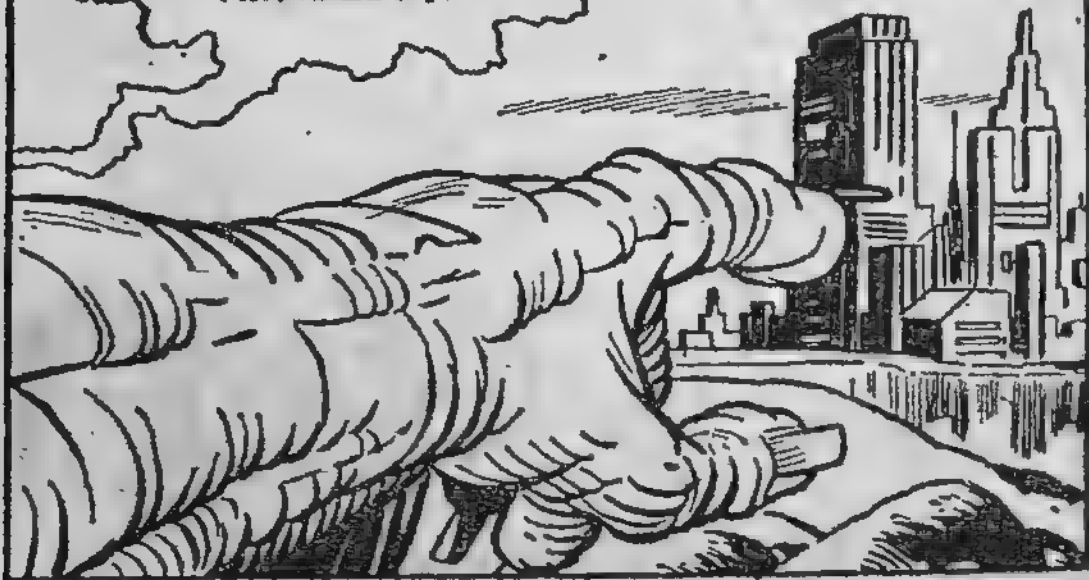
IT'S INCREDIBLE!

MONSTROUS!

STOP IT!! WE'VE SEEN ENOUGH!

GOOM CALMLY REVERSED THE TIME CONTROLS AND BROUGHT HIS VICTIM BACK TO THE PRESENT! THEN, THE HIDEOUS LEVIATHAN BEGAN HIS SECOND MIND-STAGGERING FEAT!

YOU HAVE SEEN THE POWER OF MY MACHINES! NOW YOU SHALL SEE THE POWER OF GOOM HIMSELF!



WHAT'S HAPPENING??

THE STREET! IT'S MOVING! IT'S AN EARTHQUAKE!

NO! WE'RE ALL RISING!! THE WHOLE CITY IS RISING!



IT WAS BEYOND BELIEF! GOOM'S MENTAL ENERGY-- AND NOTHING ELSE-- WAS LIFTING THE CAPTIVE CITY HIGHER AND HIGHER...

I'M GOING MAD! THIS CAN'T BE REAL! IT CAN'T!

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THERE'S NOTHING UNDER US-- NOTHING LIFTING US-- AND YET WE'RE IN THE AIR!!



BY MENTAL CONCENTRATION ALONE, I SHALL MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE HAPPEN! I SHALL MAKE AN ENTIRE CITY RISE INTO THE AIR!



WHEN HE SAW THE AWE--THE BEWILDERMENT--IN OUR EYES, GOOM KNEW HE HAD SUCCEEDED! WE WERE ALL IN FEAR OF HIM! NOW THERE REMAINED BUT ONE THING MORE FOR HIM TO DEMONSTRATE...

YOU HAVE SEEN MY POWER! NOW I SHALL SHOW YOU MY DEFENSE! NOW SHALL YOU KNOW THAT THOUGH GOOM CAN DESTROY, NONE CAN DESTROY HIM!

COME, EARTHLINGS--ATTACK ME! TRY TO STRIKE GOOM!

TOO FRIGHTENED TO DISOBEY, WE ALL RUSHED AT THE MAMMOTH ALIEN--BUT NOT ONE OF US COULD LAY A FINGER ON HIM!

THERE'S SOMETHING HERE--I CAN'T SEE IT--BUT I CAN FEEL IT! IT'S HOLDING ME BACK!

IT'S LIKE AN, UNSEEN WALL, I CAN'T GO THROUGH IT!



HAH! I ASSURE YOU, THE GREATEST WEAPONS ON EARTH COULD NO MORE PENETRATE MY FORCE FIELD THAN COULD YOU!

WE ARE HELPLESS! GOOM IS INVINCIBLE!



NOW HEAR ME WELL, EARTHLINGS! THIS IS MY ULTIMATUM! EITHER I BECOME THE SUPREME RULER OF EARTH--OR THERE WILL NO LONGER BE AN EARTH! FOR I WILL ANNIHILATE THIS ENTIRE PLANET!



IT IS FOR YOU TO MAKE THE CHOICE! WHAT SHALL IT BE-- MY RULE ...OR THE END OF EARTH?

WE MUST LET GOOM BECOME OUR RULER! ANYTHING IS BETTER THAN TOTAL DESTRUCTION!

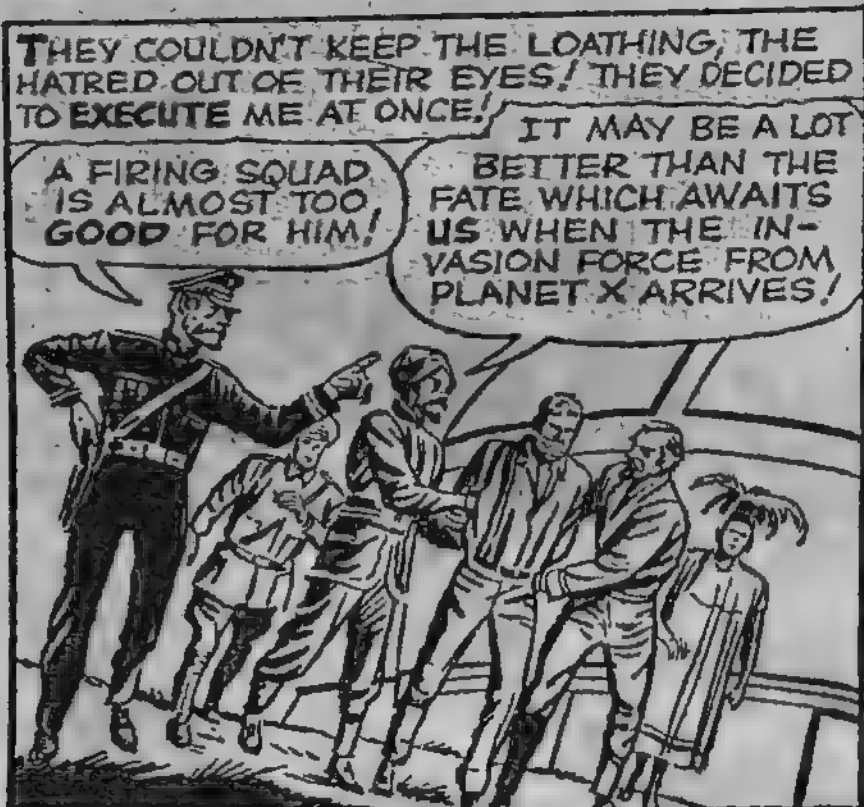
AT LEAST WHILE THE TITAN RULES US, WE WILL HAVE TIME TO THINK, TO PERHAPS FIND SOME WAY OF DEFEATING HIM!



BUT WHILE THE FEARFUL ONLOOKERS WERE CHOOSING THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS, I DECIDED ON A THIRD COURSE OF ACTION!

I MUST DO IT... IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT CAN SAVE US!





THE SHIPS LANDED, THE DOORS OPENED, AND OUT THEY CAME...



LOOK AT THEM-- THEY'RE EVEN MORE MONSTROUS--MORE EVIL-LOOKING THAN GOOM HIMSELF!

BUT WHEN THEY SAW US, THE FIRST THING THE ALIENS DID WAS TO STOP MY EXECUTION!

RELEASE THAT EARTHMAN! WE ALLOW NO LIVING CREATURE TO BE SLAIN!

OUR RACE IS OPPOSED TO ALL VIOLENCE!

BUT...WE DON'T UNDERSTAND! SINCE HIS ARRIVAL, GOOM HAS BEEN THREATENING US WITH DESTRUCTION--WITH ANNIHILATION!

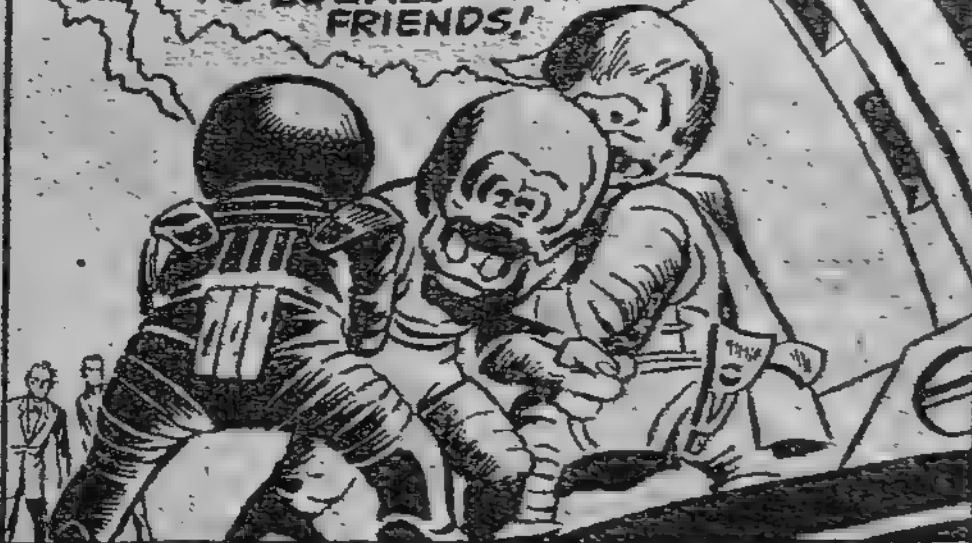


AH, THAT WAS TO BE EXPECTED... FOR ON OUR WORLD, GOOM IS AN OUTCAST!... A SICK RENEGADE WHO IS BANNED FROM SOCIETY!

IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT YOUR FIRST RADAR BEAM REACHED HIM INSTEAD OF US!

BUT NOW WE SHALL TAKE HIM BACK TO OUR PLANET! HE WILL NEVER BOTHER YOU AGAIN!

WHEN NEXT WE MEET, EARTHMAN, IT WILL BE AS EQUALS--AND AS FRIENDS!



THEN THE ALIENS BOARDED THEIR SHIPS AND, IN SPLIT-SECONDS, WERE GONE!

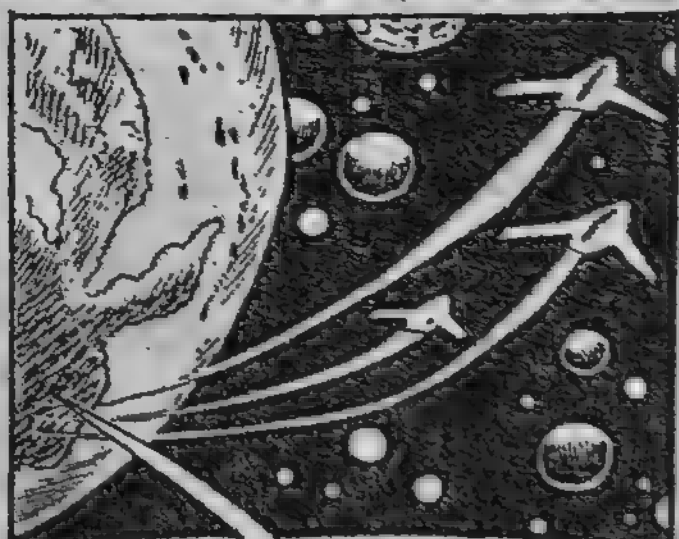
YOU MUST HAVE KNOWN THE OTHER ALIENS WOULD BE PEACEFUL... THAT'S WHY YOU SENT THE SECOND SET OF RADAR SIGNALS!

THAT'S RIGHT!

BUT HOW, DARLING? HOW DID YOU KNOW??



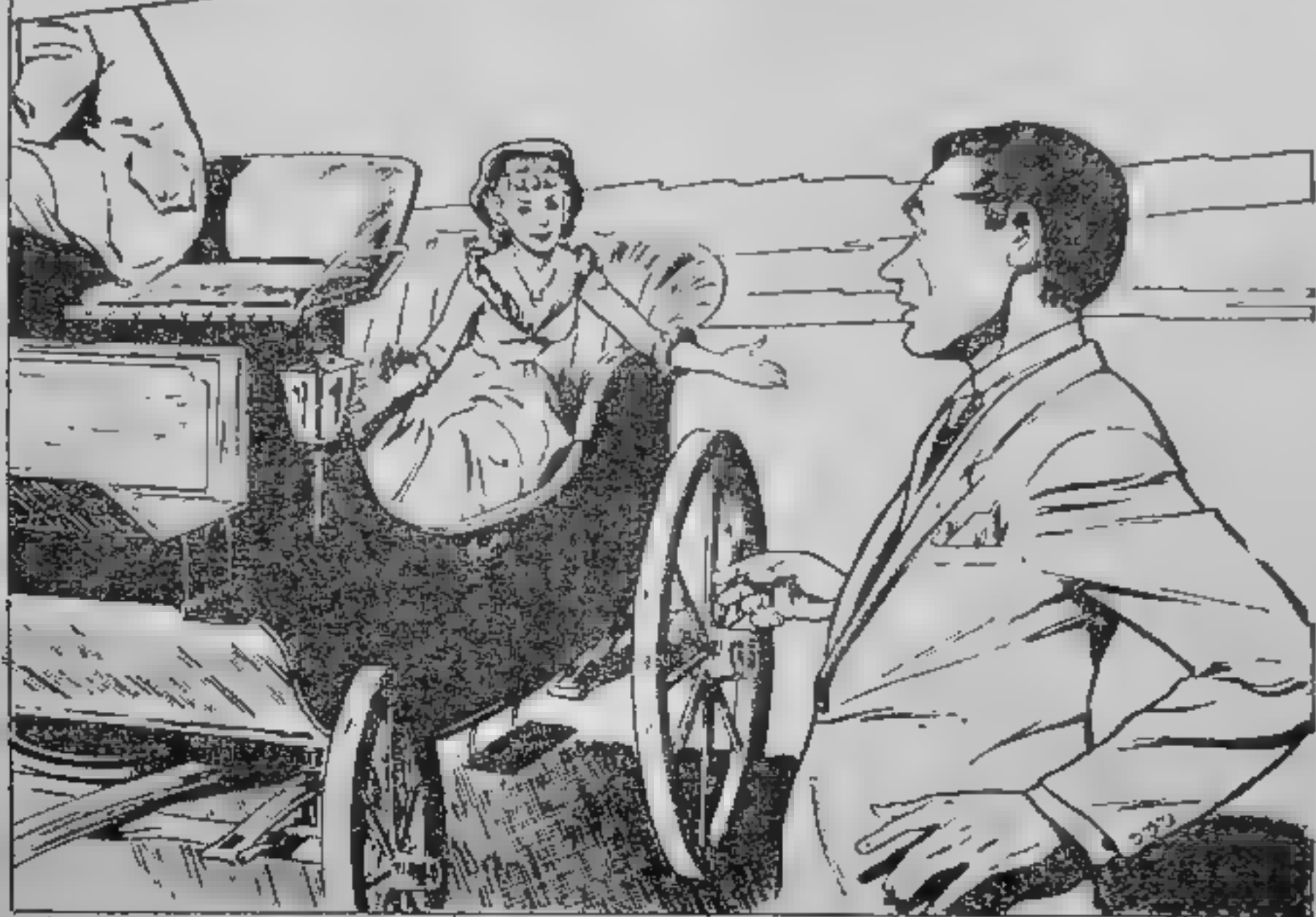
I KNEW BECAUSE OF MY TRAINING AS A PSYCHOLOGIST! I WAS CERTAIN THAT ANY RACE AS ADVANCED AS GOOM'S, MUST BE TOO CIVILIZED TO BE EVIL--TOO CIVILIZED TO MENACE OTHERS! IT'S ONLY THE IGNORANT, THE FRIGHTENED, AND THE WEAK WHO ARE HUNGRY FOR POWER!



SECURE IN THAT KNOWLEDGE, WE MUST NEVER FEAR TO CONTACT OTHER RACES! MAN-KIND WAS MEANT TO GO FORWARD!... TO GO ON FACING AND SOLVING ALL PROBLEMS UNTIL EVENTUALLY WE REACH OUR DESTINY--IN THE STARS!!

THE END

PREVIOUS EXISTENCE



MEET ANTHONY, READER - A MUCH-WORRIED MAN---

JUST WHAT DOES THIS FINANCIAL REPORT ON MY BUSINESS BOIL DOWN TO?

THAT YOU'RE IN A BAD WAY, MR. OWEN! EITHER YOU REDUCE THE SIZE OF YOUR WEEKLY DRAWINGS, OR YOU'LL FACE RUIN!



IT'S PEG THAT WIFE OF MINE WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THIS! HER EXTRAVAGANCE, THOSE CONSTANT EXORBITANT DEMANDS OF HERS... I'VE GOT TO PUT A STOP TO IT!



BUT PEG BEAT HIM TO THE PUNCH THAT NIGHT---

THIS OLD HOUSE HAS OUTLIVED ITS USEFULNESS ANTHONY! I WANT TO MOVE INTO SOMETHING MODERN AND BEAUTIFUL, MORE BEFITTING THE WIFE OF AN IMPORTANT EXECUTIVE!

ARE YOU CRAZY? OWEN MAJOR HAS BEEN IN MY FAMILY SINCE 1743 --IT'S MY HOME AND I LOVE IT! I'LL NEVER MOVE FROM HERE... IT'S TIME WE HAD A TALK YOU AND I!



JUST LOOK AT THESE BILLS YOU'VE RUN UP---COATS, DRESSES, EVENING GOWNS---YOU MUST THINK I'M MADE OF MONEY!

DON'T FORGET MY POSITION N LIFE! I'VE GOT TO LOOK MY BEST AT ALL TIMES---AFTER ALL, THE BEST IS NONE TOO GOOD FOR ME!

AS USUAL, HE FOUND HER VANITY MADDENING---

LOOK AT THIS ONE---FROM YOUR BEAUTY SALON---\$632!

I'VE GOT LOOKS---YOU WOULDN'T WANT ME TO NEGLECT THEM, WOULD YOU?

THERE'S GOING TO BE A **NEW ORDER** AROUND HERE! WE CAN'T AFFORD THE SERVANTS ANY LONGER! THERE'S NO REASON WHY YOU CAN'T DO SOME COOKING AND CLEANING---IT ISN'T AS IF YOU HAVEN'T GOT YOUR HEALTH---

HOW DARE YOU MAKE SUCH A SUGGESTION! AS IF I'D DIRTY MY HANDS AT MENIAL TASKS!

WELL I'M WILLING TO! I'VE DISCHARGED THE FURNACE MAN---I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE HEAT MYSELF!

THAT'S A LAUGH! ONLY JOE KNEW HOW TO KEEP THE COAL GAS DOWN IN THAT OLD FURNACE---YOU'LL KILL US YOU AND YOUR STUPID ECONOMY!

FAR INTO THE NIGHT THEY ARGUED BITTERLY---TILL FINALLY ANTHONY EXPLODED IN ANGER---

I'VE REALIZED IT FOR A LONG TIME PEG---OUR MARRIAGE WAS A MISTAKE!

OH---YOU KNOW IT TOO? THEN PERHAPS WE'D BETTER START THINKING ABOUT SEPARATING!

HE TENDED THE FURNACE AND THEY RET RED IN BITTERNESS---

SHE'S---RUINED MY LIFE! OH, IF ONLY I HAD IT TO DO ALL OVER AGAIN---

THEN CAME TROUBLED SLEEP! HE THEN KNEW THAT FROM THE VENT, DEADLY COAL GAS WAS FLOODING INTO THE CHAMBER

COAL GAS---THE SILENT KILLER

HIS BRAIN WAS IN A DIZZY WHIRL -- BUT HE SEEMED TO RECOLLECT RISING, STAGGERING TOWARDS THE CLOSED DOOR



GOT TO GET DOWNSTAIRS -- OPEN THE DAMPER ON THE FURNACE -- BEFORE WE'RE OVERCOME --

HE STEPPED INTO THE HALL -- LOOKED DOWN AT HIMSELF -- AND RECOILED IN SHEER AMAZEMENT!



GREAT SCOTT! I'M WEARING CLOTHES -- RIGHT OUT OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY!

WONDERFULLY HE DESCENDED HIS STAIRS AT LAST -- BELOW, A GAY AND DAWDLED -- SILENTLY APPROX



IT'S THAT TIME -- ANTHONY -- 320 -- 4 PM TO BE -- 10 -- 45 -- 50 -- 55 -- 60 -- 65 -- 70 -- 75 -- 80 -- 85 -- 90 -- 95 -- 100 -- 105 -- 110 -- 115 -- 120 -- 125 -- 130 -- 135 -- 140 -- 145 -- 150 -- 155 -- 160 -- 165 -- 170 -- 175 -- 180 -- 185 -- 190 -- 195 -- 200 -- 205 -- 210 -- 215 -- 220 -- 225 -- 230 -- 235 -- 240 -- 245 -- 250 -- 255 -- 260 -- 265 -- 270 -- 275 -- 280 -- 285 -- 290 -- 295 -- 300 -- 305 -- 310 -- 315 -- 320 -- 325 -- 330 -- 335 -- 340 -- 345 -- 350 -- 355 -- 360 -- 365 -- 370 -- 375 -- 380 -- 385 -- 390 -- 395 -- 400 -- 405 -- 410 -- 415 -- 420 -- 425 -- 430 -- 435 -- 440 -- 445 -- 450 -- 455 -- 460 -- 465 -- 470 -- 475 -- 480 -- 485 -- 490 -- 495 -- 500 -- 505 -- 510 -- 515 -- 520 -- 525 -- 530 -- 535 -- 540 -- 545 -- 550 -- 555 -- 560 -- 565 -- 570 -- 575 -- 580 -- 585 -- 590 -- 595 -- 600 -- 605 -- 610 -- 615 -- 620 -- 625 -- 630 -- 635 -- 640 -- 645 -- 650 -- 655 -- 660 -- 665 -- 670 -- 675 -- 680 -- 685 -- 690 -- 695 -- 700 -- 705 -- 710 -- 715 -- 720 -- 725 -- 730 -- 735 -- 740 -- 745 -- 750 -- 755 -- 760 -- 765 -- 770 -- 775 -- 780 -- 785 -- 790 -- 795 -- 800 -- 805 -- 810 -- 815 -- 820 -- 825 -- 830 -- 835 -- 840 -- 845 -- 850 -- 855 -- 860 -- 865 -- 870 -- 875 -- 880 -- 885 -- 890 -- 895 -- 900 -- 905 -- 910 -- 915 -- 920 -- 925 -- 930 -- 935 -- 940 -- 945 -- 950 -- 955 -- 960 -- 965 -- 970 -- 975 -- 980 -- 985 -- 990 -- 995

THE TALK CONTINUED GAILY ABOUT HIM -- REFERRING TO THE LADY MARGUERITE'S BEAUTY AND NOBILITY -- HOW ANTHONY HAD BEEN BETROTHED TO HER EVER SINCE THEY WERE CHILDREN -- AND NOW HE WAS SEEING HER FOR THE FIRST TIME --



WHAT IS ALL THIS? IT CAN'T BE A DREAM -- IT'S TOO REAL FOR THAT! SOMEHOW I'VE GONE BACK IN TIME -- INTO THE BODY OF AN 18TH CENTURY ANCESTOR!



HERE SHE IS! SHE'S COMING NOW! THEN MAYBE I'VE GOT TO LIVE MY ANCESTOR'S LIFE OUT! I'M LUCKY TO HAVE BECOME ANOTHER MAN -- BECAUSE MAYBE NOW THERE CAN BE TRUE LOVE FOR ME! I'VE ESCAPED FROM PEG!

HIS HEART BEATING FAST, HE WENT OUTSIDE TO WELCOME HIS NEW BRIDE!



OH, ANTHONY -- ANTHONY! YOU'RE EVEN HANDSOMER THAN YOUR PICTURES!

OH, N-NO! IT'S -- PEG!

BUT HE RALLIED, KNOWING THAT THIS COULDN'T BE HIS WIFE --



IT -- IT'S JUST A CHANCE RESEMBLANCE, THAT'S ALL -- AFTER ALL PEG WON'T EVEN BE BORN FOR ALMOST TWO CENTURIES TO COME! AND LADY MARGUERITE MAY BE VERY, VERY DIFFERENT --

SO ANTHONY EXTENDED HIMSELF TO BE AS AGREEABLE AS POSSIBLE! HE FOUND MARGUERITE CHARMING COMPANY...

AS THE DAYS PASSED, HE FOUND HIMSELF GROWING CLOSER AND CLOSER TO HER...



DO YOU KNOW HOW WONDERFUL YOU ARE TO BE WITH?

THANKS-- BUT YOU NEEDN'T SOUND SO SURPRISED, YOU KNOW! IT'S JUST THAT YOU BRING OUT A GIRL'S BEST SIDE!



YOU CAN SEE IT FROM HERE-- ALL OF MY PROPERTY! AND IT'S YOURS-- OR WILL BE, AS SOON AS WE'RE MARRIED!

I CAN HARDLY WAIT FOR THAT DAY! WE'RE GOING TO BE SO HAPPY...

SOMETIMES HE WAS ABLE TO STAND OFF, RECOLLECTING PEG EVEN AS HE GAZED AT MARGUERITE...

BUT AS THEIR WEDDING DATE DREW CLOSE, HE FOUND THAT LADY MARGUERITE AND PEG WEREN'T SO DIFFERENT, AFTER ALL!

HOW CAN A MAN FALL IN LOVE WITH THE SAME WOMAN HE HATES? EXCEPT THAT I'M A DIFFERENT MAN, I GUESS-- AND SHE SURE IS A DIFFERENT GIRL!



YOU'LL FIND THIS GAME QUITE AMUSING! FIRST, YOU TAKE THIS BROOM --

NEVER! I'D NO MORE EVEN TOUCH IT THAN THINK OF DIRTYING MY HANDS ON MENIAL WORK!

WHY-- IT COULD BE PEG SAYING THOSE VERY WORDS!

THERE WERE OTHER THINGS, TOO! FOR MARGUERITE HAD BEEN MAKING PURCHASES FOR THE HOUSEHOLD THEY WERE TO SHARE --

HE FORGAVE HER FOR HE'D GROWN TO CARE GREATLY FOR HER! BUT THERE WERE MANY EPISODES WHICH FROLE HIS HEART WITHIN HIM --

WITH EACH HOUR THAT PASSED, THE SIMILARITY BECAME CLEARER...

YOU MEAN YOU BOUGHT THIS CLOTH OF GOLD MY DEAR? BUT THE PRICE -- IT'S EXORBITANT! I CAN HARDLY AFFORD SUCH AN EXPENDITURE --

NONSENSE! YOU KNOW THAT NOTHING WILL BE TOO GOOD FOR YOUR WIFE!



AM I NOT BEAUTIFUL, DARLING? IT'S A PITY YOU DON'T HAVE HAIR-DRESSERS IN THIS CRUDE COUNTRY THAT CAN DO ME JUSTICE -- I'LL HAVE TO IMPORT A SPECIAL ONE FOR MYSELF FROM ENGLAND!

THAT VANITY-- JUST LIKE PEG'S



DO YOU LIKE ME IN IT? NO DAY IS COMPLETE WITHOUT A NEW GOWN YOU KNOW!

GOOD HEAVENS -- IT'S JUST LIKE IT WAS IN THAT OTHER LIFE. IN THE 20TH CENTURY! I -- I FEEL THE SAME

TRAP CLOSING ABOUT ME!



BUT THEY'D BEEN ENGAGED FOR YEARS---AND HE WAS TOO MUCH OF A GENTLEMAN TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT! IT WASN'T UNTIL JUST BEFORE THE WEDDING THAT SOMETHING HAPPENED WHICH CHANGED ALL THAT---

I CAN TELL YOU NOW, ANTHONY--- YOU'RE TAKING YOUR LAST LOOK AT OWEN MANOR! YOU'VE GOT TO BUILD ME A LARGER AND WEALTHIER HOME!

WHAT SORT OF NONSENSE ARE YOU TALKING, MARGUERITE? WHAT'S WRONG WITH OWEN MANOR?

YOU FORGET THAT I COME OF NOBLE BIRTH! I'M ACCUSTOMED TO FINER THINGS---TO CASTLES!

THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH! NOW I'M GOING TO BE A MAN ABOUT IT, AND DO WHAT I SHOULD HAVE DONE BEFORE! WE'RE THROUGH! DO YOU UNDERSTAND! OUR MARRIAGE IS OFF!

YOU CAN GO BACK TO ENGLAND AND YOUR CASTLES---AND GOOD RIDDANCE TO YOU!

OH---

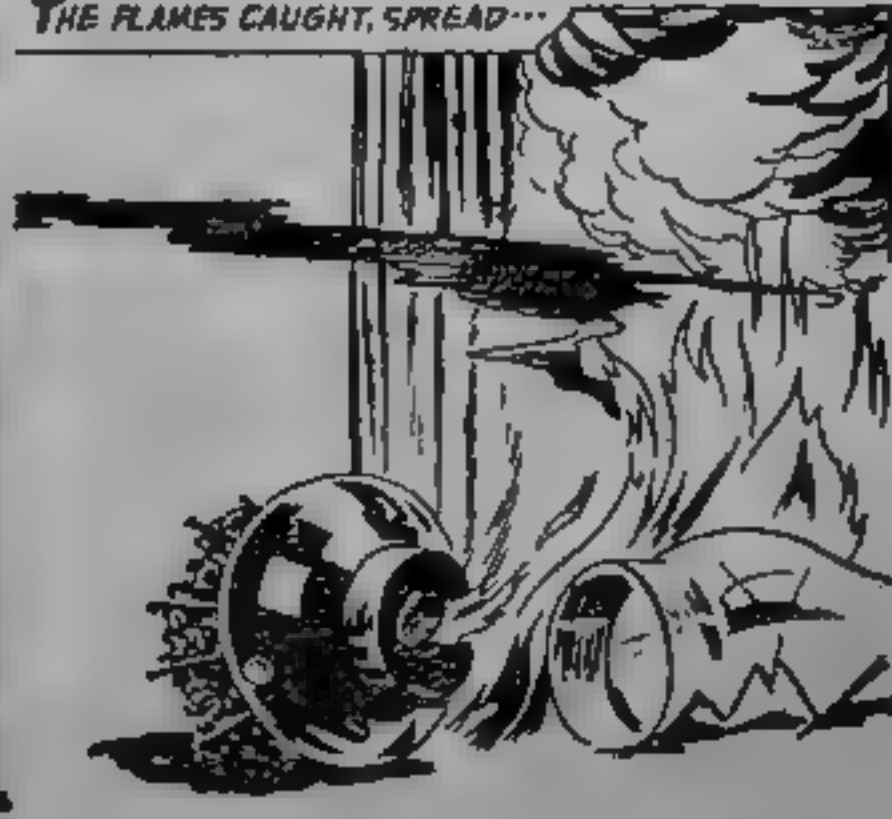
THE ASSEMBLED WEDDING GUESTS WERE SHOCKED AS SHE DEPARTED---HER EYES SEARCHING FORLORNLY FOR ANTHONY.

IT WAS ALREADY NIGHT! WITHIN HIS CHAMBER, HE TOOK A SLEEPING DRAUGHT, FELL INTO EXHAUSTED, RESTLESS SLUMBER---



A GALE ROSE! THE WIND STRUCK SWIFTLY---

THE FLAMES CAUGHT, SPREAD---



MEANWHILE—LADY MARGUERITE'S COACH HAD BEEN DELAYED BY A BROKEN WHEEL—



ALL FIXED NOW, YOUR LADYSHIP! WE CAN GO ON!

WAIT! UP ON THAT DISTANT HILL... THAT FLICKERING LIGHT... WHAT IS IT?

IT'S A FIRE, MUM... IT'S OWEN MANOR!

UNHITCH ONE OF THE HORSES! I'M GOING BACK!



SHE RODE BACK WITH THE SPEED OF THE WIND—



MR. OWEN... WHERE IS HE?

HE... HE'S TRAPPED INSIDE HIS ROOM! THE FIRE MUST HAVE STARTED THERE... WE COULDN'T EVEN GET NEAR HIM!



OH, NO... NO!

COME BACK, LADY MARGUERITE... COME BACK! YOU CAN'T SAVE HIM!



THEN... I DON'T WANT TO LIVE MYSELF!

THE FLAMES WERE EVERYWHERE—BUT SHE DARED THEM—



I'VE GOT TO GET TO HIM...

SHEER COURAGE WON THROUGH—



IF ONLY HE'S ALIVE... PLEASE, LET HIM BE ALIVE...

YES, HE WAS STILL ALIVE...HAZILY, HE SAW HER ANXIOUS FACE ABOVE HIM, HEARD WORDS OF LOVE THAT MADE HIM STRANGELY HAPPY...

THEN HIS VISION BLURRED AS HIS SENSES SLIPPED AWAY...BUT THE MEMORY OF HER LOVELINESS KEPT REVOLVING IN HIS CONSCIOUSNESS...



OH, DARLING, DARLING... YOU MUSTN'T DIE... I LOVE YOU...

BRING BANDAGES! LADY MARGUERITE'S ARMS ARE BURNED!



NOW HIS EYES OPENED AGAIN--GOOD, SHE WAS STILL THERE, STILL BENDING OVER HIM AS BEFORE! BUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED? HER CLOTHES WERE DIFFERENT--SO WAS THE PLACE WHERE HE LAY...

NOW MEMORY AND AWARENESS FLOODED BACK TO HIM! WHY, THIS WAS 1955!...AND THE 18TH CENTURY LADY MARGUERITE HAD BEEN BUT A DREAM! THIS WAS PEG...HIS WIFE...



OH, DARLING, DARLING... YOU MUSTN'T DIE... I LOVE YOU...



THAT...THAT COAL GAS MUST HAVE GOTTEN ME! I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR TAKING IT HARD--YOU DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE YOUR MEAL TICKET, DID YOU?

ANTHONY! YOU...YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT!

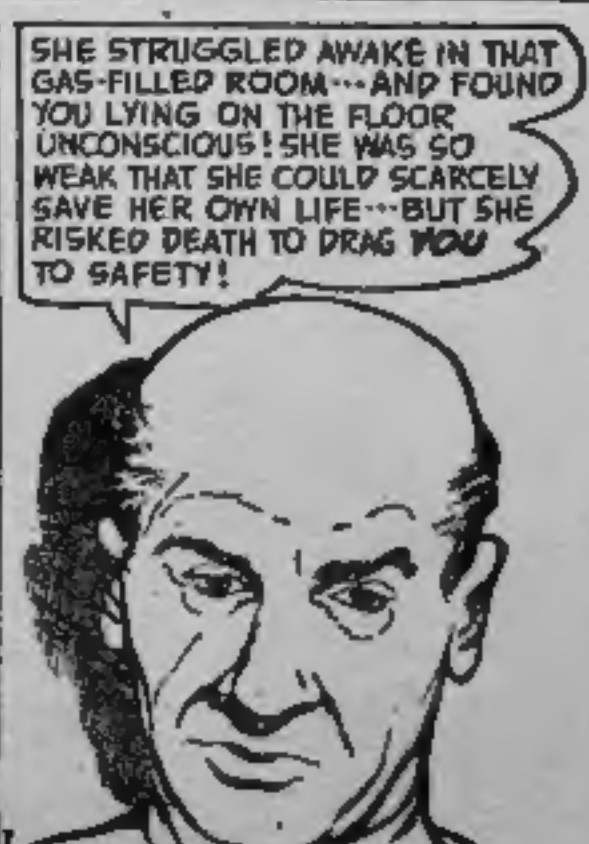


OH, CAN'T I! IT'S TOO LATE FOR US, PEG--IT'S ALL OVER BETWEEN US, AND I'LL ASK YOU TO LEAVE!



THAT WAS A PRETTY ROTTEN THING YOU DID TO HER, MR. OWEN... CONSIDERING WHAT SHE'D JUST DONE FOR YOU!

WHAT--DID SHE DO FOR ME? WHAT DID SHE EVER DO FOR ME?



SHE STRUGGLED AWAKE IN THAT GAS-FILLED ROOM--AND FOUND YOU LYING ON THE FLOOR UNCONSCIOUS! SHE WAS SO WEAK THAT SHE COULD SCARCELY SAVE HER OWN LIFE--BUT SHE RISKED DEATH TO DRAG YOU TO SAFETY!



SHE...SHE REALLY DID THAT?

YES...AND SHE WOULDN'T EVEN LEAVE YOUR SIDE UNTIL YOU SENT HER AWAY! I HOPE YOU'RE FEELING ASHAMED OF YOURSELF, MR. OWEN...BECAUSE YOU OUGHT TO BE!



THERE WAS JUST TIME TO CATCH HER IN THE HALL...

ANTHONY! YOU...YOU SHOULDN'T BE OUT HERE! WHAT...DID YOU WANT?

LET'S GET BACK TO THE ROOM! THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT!



YOU RISKED YOUR LIFE FOR ME, PEG...WHY?

YOU...YOU WERE LYING ON THE FLOOR, DYING, AND SOMETHING SEEMED TO SNAP INSIDE ME! I SAW MYSELF FOR WHAT I'D BEEN...**VAIN, SELFISH**...AND I SAW THAT NONE OF IT WAS AS IMPORTANT AS THE DEEP DOWN FEELING I HAD FOR YOU...**MY HUSBAND!**



I'D LOVED YOU ONCE, WHEN WE WERE MARRIED! THE OLD FEELING HAD BECOME BURIED UNDER PETTY QUARRELS AND FOOLISH VANITY...BUT I...I GUESS IT WAS STILL THERE...

I CARED FOR YOU, TOO...UNTIL SOMEHOW, OUR LOVE BECAME SIDETRACKED! PEG...

CAN'T WE STILL MAKE A GO OF IT?



OH, DARLING...MY DARLING...

PEG, SWEETHEART...IT'LL BE FOR **GOOD** THIS TIME!



IT WAS THEN THAT HE SAW HER BANGED ARMS...

YOUR ARMS, HONEY...WHATEVER HAPPENED?

I...DON'T **KNOW**, ANTHONY! IT WAS ONLY AFTER I'D PULLED YOU OUT OF THAT GAS-FILLED BEDROOM THAT I'D NOTICED THEM!



IT WAS A FUNNY THING, TOO, BECAUSE I'D BEEN DREAMING ABOUT SAVING YOU FROM A FIRE HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO! AND WHEN I WOKE UP...**MY ARMS WERE BURNED!**

THE END!

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THIS SERIES**

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SUSPENSE

★

SINISTER TALES

★

CREEPY WORLDS

★

SECRETS OF THE UNKNOWN

★

UNCANNY TALES

★

ASTOUNDING STORIES

★

OUT OF THIS WORLD

★

WEIRD PLANETS

PLACE YOUR ORDER NOW